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21

MORAL AND LITERARY

DISSERTATIONS.

21

REM TIBI SOCRATICÆ POTERUNT OSTENDERE CHARTÆ.

——— QUO VIRTUS; QUO FERAT ERROR.

HOR.

MORAL AND LITERARY

DISSERTATIONS;

CHIEFLY INTENDED

AS THE SEQUEL

TO

A FATHER's INSTRUCTIONS.

THE SECOND EDITION,

REVISED, AND MUCH ENLARGED;

By THOMAS PERCIVAL, M.D.

F.R.S. AND A.S. LOND. F.R.S. AND R.M.S. EDINB.

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MEDICINE AT PARIS;

OF THE ROY. SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURE AT LYONS;

AND OF THE

AMERICAN PHILOSOPH. SOC. AT PHILADELPHIA;

&c. &c.

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MDCCLXXXIX.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF;

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

PERMIT me, again, to offer this volume of Moral and Literary Diſſertations to your Lordſhip's acceptance and patronage. The work has been much enlarged; and I ſhall think myſelf happy, if it continue to be honoured with your indulgence and approbation. I feel a lively ſenſe of the value

of your friendſhip; and venerate thoſe diſtinguiſhed talents and virtues, which you have ſo uniformly, and aſſiduouſly exerted in the promotion of ſcience, religion, and liberty. With every affectionate wiſh for your Lordſhip's health, felicity, and the ſtill further extenſion of your uſefulneſs; and with the moſt cordial reſpect and attachment, I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordſhip's much obliged,

and moſt faithful,

humble Servant,

THOMAS PERCIVAL.

THE

PREFACE.

IN offering to the public a miſcellaneous work, like the following, it may be proper to give a brief account of the different parts, of which it is compoſed. The SOCRATIC DISCOURSE was written ſeveral years ago, for the uſe of the author's own family; and a few printed copies of it were diſtributed amongſt his friends. The approbation with which it has been honoured, by ſome of the moſt judicious of them, has abated his diffidence concerning it; and the deſire of rendering his private labours of utility to

mankind, has induced him to commit it again to the preſs. It forms the firſt part of a plan, which he has long had in contemplation, of teaching his elder children the moſt important branches of ethics, viz. VERACITY, FAITHFULNESS, JUSTICE, and BENEVOLENCE, in a *ſyſtematic* and *experimental* manner, by EXAMPLES. But various cauſes have hitherto prevented, and will probably continue to prevent, the completion of his deſign. He cordially wiſhes, therefore, that ſome moraliſt, of more leiſure and ſuperior abilities, into whoſe hands this little piece may fall, would execute, in its full extent, what is here ſo partially and imperfectly attempted.

To promote the love of truth, and to excite an averſion to duplicity and falſehood,

falſehood, are objects which merit the moſt ſerious attention, in the buſineſs of education. And as the minds of children, at an early age, are incapable of diſcerning the diſtinctions and ſubordinations of moral duty, the rules, preſcribed to them, ſhould be abſolute and without exception. But in the more advanced period of youth, obſervation and reading will neceſſarily point out many deviations from theſe rules, not only in the converſation and conduct of their friends, but in the moſt applauded actions which hiſtory records. And when ſuch reflections ſuggeſt themſelves, it is a proof that the powers of the underſtanding are unfolded; and that it will be ſeaſonable to graft rational knowledge on the love of virtue. For to obviate error is the firſt ſtep towards rectitude; and the abuſe of reaſon, in our moral

moral judgments, too frequently terminates in depravity of principle.

The author has, in general, given his authorities for the facts, which he has related, that hiſtoric truth may be diſtinguiſhed from the fictions, introduced for the ſake of illuſtration: But in the ſtory of the king of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV. of France, they have been unavoidably intermingled. On this point M. Boulard, an advocate of conſiderable rank at Paris, who has tranſlated the preſent work into very elegant French, thus expreſſes himſelf: *On a vu qu'il dit dans ſa préface qu'il a ajouté quelques faits de ſon invention, àce qu'il a raconté de Henri IV. Je penſe qu'il auroit été plus convenable de ne pas mêler des fictions à l'hiſtoire.* But the author does not recollect any hiſtorical fact, which

which fully exemplifies the caſe in queſtion: And the reference to Sully's Memoirs will ſhew the preciſe boundary between truth and fiction.

It is well known to the learned, that Socrates gave riſe to a new mode of inſtruction, in the ſchools of philoſophy; and that Plato and Xenophon, by recording the moral converſations of their amiable maſter, excited a taſte for dialogue, which has prevailed through all ſucceeding ages. The mode of exemplification, purſued in the preſent work, has neceſſarily occaſioned ſome deviation from each of theſe great originals; who are indeed, themſelves ſo different, as to agree only in one common outline. But the author has copied both, in many particulars; eſpecially in the adoption of real characters,

characters, for the *dramatis perſonæ*, or ſpeakers in his diſcourſe. How far he has done juſtice to the talents or opinions of Philocles, it is not for him to determine. But if the ſentiments, imputed to his late honoured friend, be ſuch as he would not have avowed; let it be remembered, that Plato alſo wrote what Socrates diſclaimed*; and that the author alone is anſwerable for whatever he has delivered.

The ESSAYS on the INFLUENCE of HABIT and ASSOCIATION; on INCONSISTENCY of EXPECTATION in LITERARY PURSUITS; on the ADVANTAGES of a TASTE for

* The LYSIS. When Socrates heard this dialogue of Plato read, in which he ſupported the principal character, "Gods!" he exclaimed, "how "this young man makes me ſay what I never "thought!"

the

the GENERAL BEAUTIES of NATURE and of ART; on the ALLIANCE of NATURAL HISTORY and PHILOSOPHY with POETRY; and on the INTELLECTUAL and MORAL CONDUCT of EXPERIMENTAL PURSUITS, have been read before the LITERARY and PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, of Manchester, and honoured with a place in their journals. But, in these several compositions, the discerning reader will perceive evident traits of paternal instruction: And that, both in the choice of the subjects, and in the method of discussing them, he has had in view, the interests of those, in whose improvement he is most nearly and tenderly concerned. They will therefore, he trusts, be deemed no improper sequel to the SOCRATIC DISCOURSE.

The

The compoſition of a TRIBUTE to the MEMORY of CHARLES DE POLIER, ESQ. devolved upon him, as the friend of the deceaſed, and officially, as PRESIDENT of the very reſpectable ſociety, which appointed this record of his merit. It was written under the impreſſion of heart-felt ſorrow; and on that account may, perhaps, be ſuſpected of exhibiting a picture, too ſtrong in its lineaments, and too glowing in its colours. But time, which calms every emotion, and reſtores the due authority of judgment over imagination, has made no change in the author's ſentiments, concerning the character he has drawn. And the inſertion of it, in this work, whilſt it gratifies the feelings of his mind, is perfectly conſonant to the general deſign, which he has in view. For it offers a moſt inſtructive model to young

young men, who are animated with the laudable ambition of uniting liberal and polite manners, with the more ſolid attainments of learning and virtue.

The APPENDIX contains ſuch remarks and illuſtrations, as further reflection or reading have ſuggeſted, ſince theſe Diſſertations were written. The author is fully apprized of the peculiar delicacy and difficulty of the moral topics, which he has attempted to inveſtigate; and truſts, that he ſhall always be diſpoſed to acknowledge, and to rectify any errors, into which he may have fallen. For he deems a return to truth and reaſon, more honourable than the poſſeſſion even of infallible judgment; and ſincerely adopts the ſentiment of a celebrated writer; "that "the man, who is free from miſ-

"takes,

"takes, can pretend to no praiſe,
"except what is derived from the
"juſtneſs of his underſtanding; but
"that he, who corrects his miſtakes,
"diſplays at once, the juſtneſs of his
"underſtanding, and the candour
"of his heart."

MANCHESTER, *September* 20, 1788.

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BOOKS

BOOKS

Publiſhed by THOMAS PERCIVAL, M. D. F. R. S.
and S. A. *&c. &c.*

And ſold by J. JOHNSON, No. 72, *St. Paul's Church-Yard, London.*

I. A FATHER's INSTRUCTIONS, conſiſting of MORAL TALES, FABLES, and REFLECTIONS; deſigned to promote the LOVE of VIRTUE; a TASTE for KNOWLEDGE; and an early Acquaintance with the WORKS of NATURE. Seventh Edition. Crown 8vo.

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A

SOCRATIC DISCOURSE

ON

TRUTH.

INTER SILVAS ACADEMI QUÆRERE VERUM.

HOR.

A

SOCRATIC DISCOURSE

ON

TRUTH.

TO

T. B. P.

YOU have often been a witneſs, my dear Son, of the pleaſure experienced by me, in the recollection of the Academical years, which I paſſed at ——— in the purſuit of general ſcience, before I engaged in my profeſſional ſtudies at the univerſity of ———. And you have no leſs frequently heard me expreſs the higheſt

veneration for the profound learning, and exalted character of Philocles, under whoſe tuition, the charms of knowledge firſt attracted my regard. I have lately reviſited thoſe ſcenes, ſo delightful to my youth: But, leaving to your conception the emotions which I felt, I ſhall relate to you a SOCRATIC CONVERSATION, that occurred there in my preſence, between Philocles and your kinſman Sophron. This amiable youth, who is likely to reflect a luſtre on the ſacred office, to which, I truſt, he will ere long be called, had been reciting to his Profeſſor an Academical compoſition on the importance of TRUTH, and on the folly, infamy, and baſeneſs of LYING and DECEIT. And, when he laid down the book, Philocles expreſſed an earneſt wiſh, that ſuch ſentiments might ever influence the heart, and direct the conduct of his pupil. But general rules, continued he, are inſufficient for our government in the diverſified and complicated occurrences of

of life: And, if we be ambitious of acting with wiſdom, honour, and virtue, it is neceſſary that we ſhould make ourſelves acquainted with the various branches and ſubordinations of each moral duty. Let us, therefore, take a particular view of TRUTH, and of her inſeparable companion FAITHFULNESS. You are no novice in theſe ſubjects; and Euphronius, I am perſuaded, will be pleaſed to hear you exerciſed in the diſcuſſion of them.

I preſume you will concur with me in opinion, that MORAL TRUTH is the *conformity of our expreſſions to our thoughts*; and FAITHFULNESS, *that of our actions to our expreſſions:* And that LYING or FALSEHOOD *is generally a mean, ſelfiſh, or malevolent, and always an unjuſtifiable endeavour to deceive another, by ſignifying or aſſerting that to be truth or fact, which is known or believed to be otherwiſe; and by making promiſes, without any intention to perform them.*

But, if we believe our aſſertions or ſigns to be true, and they ſhould afterwards prove to be falſe, tell me, Sophron, are we then guilty of Lying?

No, replied Sophron; we ſhall have committed only an error or miſtake: For under ſuch circumſtances, we muſt have been deceived ourſelves; and could have had no deſign of impoſing upon others.

But is every breach of promiſe a Lie, continued Philocles?

I ſhould think not, anſwered Sophron, if the promiſe were made with ſincerity, and the violation of it be unavoidable.

Your diſtinction is juſt, ſaid Philocles; and there are alſo certain conditions, obvious to the general ſenſe of mankind, underſtood or implied in almoſt every promiſe, on which the performance muſt depend. Whang-to, Emperor of China, who

who governed his people like a father, and regarded his own elevation and power as truſts delegated for their good, had a daughter who was his only child, and the darling of his old age. He promiſed her in marriage to Ouſan-quey, the ſon of his favourite mandarine, and that he would bequeath to him all his dominions as her dowry. Ouſan-quey was at that time a youth of the moſt promiſing abilities and diſpoſitions; but the proſpect of royalty, and the adulation of a court, ſoon corrupted his heart. He became haughty, inſolent, and cruel; and the people anticipated, with horror, the tyranny which they muſt endure under his government. By the inſtitutions of the Chineſe, the great officers of ſtate may remonſtrate to the emperor, when his decrees are injurious to the public intereſt; and this privilege has often tended to abate the rigour of deſpotiſm. Whang-to heard, with grief and aſtoniſhment, the complaints

of his mandarines, againſt Ouſan-quey. He ſummoned him into his preſence, and being ſatisfied with the proofs of his demerit, he addreſſed the officers of ſtate in the following terms: "I engaged "my daughter in marriage, and pro- "miſed the inheritance of my dominions "to Ouſan-quey, a youth who was wiſe, "humane, and juſt. In departing from "virtue, he has cancelled theſe obliga- "tions, and forfeited his title to both." Then turning to Ouſan-quey, he ſaid, "I command you to retire from my "court, and to paſs the remainder of "your days in the moſt diſtant province "of my empire."

But is it not deemed peculiarly honourable, Sophron, to perform a promiſe, when paſſion or ſelf-intereſt ſtrongly incites us to the violation of it?

Nothing raiſes our admiration higher, ſaid Sophron; and I beg leave to relate

to

to you a ſtory, which places this truth in a very ſtriking point of view. A Spaniſh cavalier, without any reaſonable provocation, aſſaſſinated a Mooriſh gentleman, and inſtantly fled from juſtice. He was vigorouſly purſued; but availing himſelf of a ſudden turn in the road, he leaped, unperceived, over a garden wall. The proprietor, who was alſo a Moor, happened to be, at that time, walking in the garden; and the Spaniard fell upon his knees before him, acquainted him with his caſe, and in the moſt pathetic manner, implored concealment. The Moor liſtened to him with compaſſion, and generouſly promiſed his aſſiſtance. He then locked him in a ſummer-houſe, and left him, with an aſſurance that, when night approached, he would provide for his eſcape. A few hours afterwards, the dead body of his ſon was brought to him; and the deſcription of the murderer exactly agreed with the appearance of the

the Spaniard, whom he had then in cuſtody. He concealed the horror and ſuſpicion which he felt; and retiring to his chamber, remained there till midnight. Then, going privately into the garden, he opened the door of the ſummer-houſe, and thus accoſted the cavalier: "Chriſtian," ſaid he, "the youth "whom you have murdered was my "only ſon. Your crime merits the ſe-"vereſt puniſhment. But I have ſo-"lemnly pledged my word for your "ſecurity; and I diſdain to violate even "a raſh engagement with a cruel ene-"my." He conducted the Spaniard to the ſtables, and furniſhing him with one of his ſwifteſt mules, "Fly," ſaid he, "whilſt the darkneſs of the night con-"ceals you. Your hands are polluted "with blood; but GOD is juſt; and I "humbly thank him that my faith is "unſpotted, and that I have reſigned "judgment unto him*."

* See Hiſtor. Mirror.

When

When Sophron had finiſhed this narrative, I took the liberty of obſerving that Faithfulneſs is a virtue, which we ſometimes meet with in very abandoned characters, who are neither influenced by a ſenſe of religious, nor of moral obligation. In ſuch perſons it is founded on certain ideas of HONOUR, which originally ſpring from the beſt natural principles*. After the battle of Culloden, in the year 1745, a reward of thirty thouſand pounds was offered to any one, who ſhould diſcover or deliver up the young Pretender. He had taken refuge with the Kennedies, two common thieves; who protected him with fidelity; robbed for his ſupport; and often went in diſguiſe to Inverneſs, to buy proviſions for him. A conſiderable time afterwards, one of theſe men, who had reſiſted the temptation of thirty thouſand pounds, was hanged for ſtealing a cow, of the value of thirty ſhillings †.

* Vid. Appendix, Sect. I. † See Pennant's Tour in Scotland.

But

But I apprehend, reſumed Sophron, with much modeſty, that there are caſes in which it would be more culpable to fulfil, than to violate a promiſe.

To this propoſition Philocles gave his full aſſent, and illuſtrated it by the following ſuppoſititious caſe. A brace of loaded piſtols have been left in my hands by a friend, to whom I have engaged to reſtore them, whenever he ſhall make the demand. But if he claim them when intoxicated with liquor, or mad with paſſion and reſentment, it is evident that the performance of my promiſe would not only be weak, but extremely reprehenſible: And my friend himſelf, in his calm and ſober moments, would be amongſt the firſt to charge me with all the miſchiefs, occaſioned by my erroneous ſenſe of duty. Haſty declarations and raſh aſſeverations are ſometimes made by good men, who cannot however reaſonably or conſcientiouſly

tiouſly fulfil them. When Jeſus had waſhed the feet of ſeveral of his diſciples, he came to Simon Peter: *And Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, what I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter. Peter ſaid unto him, thou ſhalt never waſh my feet! Jeſus anſwered him, if I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me. Simon Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but alſo my hands and my head**. Nor can even vows, however ſolemn, be binding, when the object of them is the commiſſion of a crime. For though appeals to the Deity are ſacred pledges of our ſincerity, they make no change in the nature or legality of actions. And it would be the groſſeſt ſuperſtition to ſuppoſe, that the violation of God's ordinances can either be honourable, or acceptable to him†. David, in revenge for an inſult offered him

* John, Chap. xiii. † See Appendix, Sect. II.

by

by Nabal, vowed that he would put to the ſword every male of his family. But his wrath was afterwards appeaſed; and he became ſo ſenſible of the injuſtice of his deſign, that he ſaid, *Bleſſed be the* LORD, *who has kept his ſervant from evil**.

It ſhould ſeem, that the Roman emperor Trajan thought it might be criminal in his officers, under certain circumſtances, to maintain the allegiance which they had ſworn to him†. On the appointment of Suberanus to be captain of the royal guard, he preſented him with a ſword, as the badge of his fealty, ſaying, "Let this be drawn in "my defence, if I rule according to "equity; but if otherwiſe, it may be "employed againſt me‡."

* 1 Sam. xxv. 22.

† See Appendix, Sect. III. ‡ Plin.

The

The concluſion concerning the obſervance of promiſes, may be extended to Veracity, notwithſtanding the extravagant declaration of one of the Fathers, "that he would not violate truth, though "he were ſure to gain heaven by it." Whenever, from the concurrence of extraordinary circumſtances, the practice of one virtue is rendered incompatible with the performance of another, of much higher obligation, it is evident that the inferior muſt yield to the ſuperior duty. An example will elucidate, and evince the juſtneſs of this obſervation.

After the horrid maſſacre of the Huguenots in France, which began on St. Bartholomew's day, 1572, the king of Navarre was very rigorouſly guarded, by the order of the queen-mother, Catharine de Medicis. But one day, when he was hunting near Senlis, during the heat of the chace, he ſeized a favourable

opportunity

opportunity of making his eſcape; and galloping through the woods, with a few faithful friends, amongſt whom was young Roſny, afterwards duke of Sully, he croſſed the Seine at Poiſſy*, and fled to the caſtle of a nobleman, who was a zealous, though ſecret proteſtant, and ſtrongly attached to his intereſt. Troops of horſe were ſoon deſpatched, different ways, in purſuit of him. One of theſe detachments ſtopped at the gates of the caſtle, where Henry was then refreſhing himſelf; and the captain demanded permiſſion to ſearch for him, ſhewing the royal mandate to bring the head of Henry, and to put his attendants to the ſword. Reſiſtance was evidently vain; and compliance would have been a breach of hoſpitality, friendſhip, and humanity; at the ſame time that it muſt have proved fatal to the intereſts of the reformed religion, and to the whole body of proteſtants

* See Sully's Memoirs; and alſo the Preface to this work.

in

in France, who had no other protector than the king of Navarre. The nobleman, therefore, without hesitation, and with an undaunted countenance, instantly said, "Waste "not your time, Sir, in fruitless searches. "The king of Navarre, with his friends, "passed this way about two hours ago; "and if you set spurs to your horse, you "will overtake him before the night ap-"proaches." The captain and his troop, satisfied with this answer, rode off at full speed; and the king was then left at liberty to provide for his safety, by disguising himself, and taking a different rout.

Under such circumstances, as you have described, all mankind, observed Sophron, would condemn a strict adherence to TRUTH*. But what do you think of the conduct

* Insani sapiens nomen ferat, æquus iniqui
Ultra quam satis est, virtutem si petat ipsam.
Hor. Ep. VI. Lib. I. V. 15.

That which being done admits of a rational justification, is the essence, or general character, of a MORAL DUTY. DIALOGUE CONCERNING HAPPINESS, by JAMES HARRIS, Esq. p. 175.

conduct of the Portugueſe ſlave, whoſe breach of veracity, and even perjury, is extolled by Abbé Raynal, in his Hiſtory of the European Settlements? This negro, who had fled into the woods to enjoy the liberty which was his natural right, having learned that his old maſter was arreſted, and likely to be condemned for a capital crime, came into the court of juſtice; aſſumed the guilt of the fact; ſuffered himſelf to be impriſoned; brought falſe, though judicial proofs of his crime; and was executed inſtead of his beloved maſter.

The right to truth may be forfeited in particular caſes, as by one who hath formed a deſign to kill another, and, if not hindered, will probably accompliſh his wicked purpoſe. Neither the perſon whoſe life is aimed at, ſhould he ſave himſelf by a lie, nor any one who ſhould tell an officious lie for him, will be guilty of the leaſt injuſtice to him, whom, by this means, they keep from perpetrating the miſchief intended. Inſtead of a wrong, it is a kindneſs. GROVE's MORAL PHILOSOPHY, Vol. II. p. 415.

Adhering to the *ordinary* rules of duty, in theſe *extraordinary* caſes, may ſometimes occaſion greater evils to our country, or to mankind, than all the virtues, any one mortal can exert, will repair HUTCHESON's MORAL PHILOSOPHY, Vol. II. 4to. p. 117. See a farther diſcuſſion of this ſubject, in the Appendix, Sect. IV. Conſult alſo Geneſis, Chap. xii.

The

The diſapprobation of falſehood, in this inſtance, anſwered Philocles, is ſuppreſſed for a while, by our admiration of the affection, gratitude, generoſity, and greatneſs of mind diſplayed by the negro. We lament the bondage of ſuch a hero; and regret that his exalted virtues were not diſplayed on a more important and honourable occaſion. But when theſe firſt emotions are over, and we diſpaſſionately reflect on the conduct of the ſlave, we muſt condemn it as an unjuſtifiable ſacrifice of truth, of his own life, and of the duty which he owed to ſociety*. The divine command, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs* AGAINST *thy neighbour*, cannot ſurely be ſuppoſed to imply, that we may bear *falſe witneſs in his* FAVOUR; becauſe this would be to forbid private injury, and to authoriſe public wrongs. Judicial teſtimony, in the preſent circumſtances of the moral world, is eſſential to the well-being of ſociety; and to leſſen the general credibility of it, by in-

* See Appendix, Sect. IV.

troducing into courts of law falſehood and perjury, is a high crime againſt the ſtate, and ſeverely puniſhed in all countries which have emerged from barbariſm. Beſides, the good of the community requires that juſtice ſhould be executed on the offender himſelf, to prevent him from committing other crimes: And it would give encouragement to vice, if an innocent perſon, perhaps tired of life, or influenced by enthuſiaſtic notions of honour, friendſhip, or love, might ſuffer for another who is guilty.

The certainty of puniſhment, even in miſdemeanors, is ſtrongly urged by the Marquis de Beccaria, the great advocate for judicial lenity. And he thinks the forgiveneſs of the injured party himſelf, ſhould not interrupt the execution of juſtice. "This "may be an act of good-nature and huma-"nity," he obſerves, "but it is contrary to "the good of the public. For although a "private citizen may diſpenſe with ſatis-"faction for his private injury, he cannot "remove the neceſſity of public example.

"The

"The right of puniſhing belongs not to "any individual in particular, but to the "ſociety in general, or the ſovereign who "repreſents that ſociety: And a man may "renounce his own portion of this right, "but he cannot give up that of others."

The conduct of the negro, ſaid Sophron, however erroneous it might be in point of wiſdom, or unjuſtifiable with reſpect to its morality, was perfectly generous and diſintereſted. But the ſame elegant writer, who records this fact, has related another example of the violation of truth, from motives purely *ſelfiſh*, which I cannot condemn, though I know not how to juſtify. I will endeavour to recollect, and to repeat the ſtory. A Britiſh ſerjeant was taken priſoner by the ſavages in America; who prepared themſelves to put him to death, with all the barbarity which their ſkill in torture could invent. Shocked with the view of the horrid ſufferings which awaited him, he thus addreſſed the Indians: "Mighty war-"riors, your preparations are vain, for my

" body is invulnerable; and if you will ſet " me at liberty, I will teach you how to " become ſo. Think not that I impoſe " upon you by falſe pretenſions. I am " willing that you ſhould try upon me an " experiment, which may ſatisfy your " doubts. Let the chief, who holds my " hanger, now ſtrike with all his force. I " equally defy the ſharpneſs of the inſtru- " ment, and the ſtrength of his arms." Whilſt he was ſaying theſe words, he bent his head, and laid bare his neck. The Indian eagerly advanced; and by one furious blow, ſevered the head from the body. Thus the poor ſerjeant, by his preſence of mind, exchanged lingering tortures for an eaſy and inſtantaneous death.

Euphronius here remarked, that the ſtory is of doubtful authority, by the confeſſion of the Abbé himſelf. But admitting the truth of it, continued he, for the ſake of argument, what moraliſt can be ſo rigid as not to deem the conduct of the ſerjeant at leaſt excuſable? Perhaps no man, in ſimi-

lar

lar circumſtances, would have acted differently, if he poſſeſſed ſufficient compoſure to deviſe, or addreſs to practiſe ſuch an expedient. The caſe is not analogous to that of martyrdom for religion. The horrid ſufferings to be endured, in this inſtance, could anſwer no good end; and ſociety received not the leaſt injury, either immediate or remote, by the evaſion of them.

Recollecting an hiſtorical fact of unqueſtionable truth, and ſtrictly applicable to the point in debate, I requeſted permiſſion to relate it. When Columbus and his crew were caſt away on an iſland, more than thirty leagues from Hiſpaniola, nothing remained to them in proſpect, but to end their miſerable days with naked ſavages, far from their country and their friends. To add to theſe calamities, the natives began ſoon to murmur at the reſidence of the ſpaniards amongſt them; the ſupport of whom became burdenſome to men, ignorant of agriculture, and unaccuſtomed to exertion or induſtry: They brought in proviſions with

reluctance, furniſhed them ſparingly, and even threatened entirely to withhold them. Such a reſolution muſt have occaſioned inevitable deſtruction to the Spaniards; but Columbus prevented it by a happy device, that revived all the admiration and reverence, with which the Indians firſt regarded theſe ſtrangers. By his ſkill in aſtronomy, he knew there was ſhortly to be a total eclipſe of the moon. On the day before it happened, he aſſembled the principal perſons of the diſtrict, and after reproaching them for their defection from thoſe, whom they had lately revered, he told them that the Spaniards were ſervants of the Great Spirit, who dwells in heaven: That, offended at their refuſal to ſupport the objects of his peculiar favour, the Deity was preparing to puniſh their crime with exemplary ſeverity; and that the moon ſhould be darkened that very night, and aſſume a bloody hue, as a ſign of the Divine wrath, and an emblem of the vengeance ready to fall on them. To this marvellous prediction, ſome of the barbarians liſtened with careleſs indifference; others,

others, with credulous aſtoniſhment: But when the moon began gradually to withdraw her light, and at length appeared of a red colour, all were ſtruck with terror. They ran with conſternation to their houſes, and returning to Columbus loaded with proviſions, threw them inſtantly at his feet, conjuring him to intercede with the Great Spirit, to avert the deſtruction with which they were threatened. Columbus, ſeeming to be moved by their entreaties, promiſed to comply with their deſire. The eclipſe went off, the moon recovered its ſplendour; and from that time, the Spaniards were not only furniſhed profuſely with proviſions, but treated with the moſt ſuperſtitious attention*. This ſolemn deceit of Columbus may be juſtified by the rights of neceſſity. Shipwrecked on a diſtant coaſt, in the proſecution of an enterprize, which, in his mind, appears to have originated from honourable and uſeful views, and deſtitute of every means of ſupplying himſelf and his

* See Robertſon's Hiſt. of America, vol. I. book. II.

aſſociates

aſſociates with ſuſtenance, he had a claim to the protection, aſſiſtance, and ſupport of the people who were ſpectators of his calamity. And it was a happy fertility of genius, which ſuggeſted to him an expedient, far preferable to the force of arms. But I feel a ſecret wiſh, that this truly great man had mixed leſs of falſity with his artifice. He might have reprehended the Indians for their want of hoſpitality, alarmed their fears by his prediction, and excited their wonder and reverence by its fulfilment, without denouncing, in ſuch unguarded terms, the immediate vengeance of Heaven. Truth is ſo important, and of ſo delicate a nature, that every poſſible precaution ſhould be employed to extenuate its violation, although the ſacrifice be made to duties which ſuperſede its obligation.

Philocles very obligingly thanked me for recalling to his memory ſo pertinent a fact. He then turned to his pupil, and aſked him what he thought of the maxim, which ſome perſons have adopted, "that faith is not to be kept with rogues or traitors."

I think

I think the maxim, replied Sophron, falſe in itſelf, and highly injurious to ſociety. For, independent of the licentiouſneſs and cruelty, to which it might give riſe, a man owes to his own honour and peace of mind, except on very extraordinary occaſions, the ſtrict performance of his promiſe. And this opinion ſeems to have influenced the conduct of the great Viſcount Turenne, and of Sir Richard Herbert. The former was attacked one night by robbers near Paris, who ſtripped him of his money, watch, and rings. He engaged to give them a hundred *louis d'ors*, if they would return him a ring, of little intrinſic worth, but on which he ſet a particular value. The highwaymen complied; and one of them had the boldneſs to go to his houſe the ſucceeding day, and in the midſt of a large company to demand, in a whiſper, the performance of his promiſe. The Viſcount gave orders for the money to be paid; and ſuffered the villain to eſcape, before he related the adventure*.

* See Ramſay's Life of Turenne.

Sir

Sir Richard Herbert, being ſent by Edward the Fourth, to reduce certain rebels in North Wales, laid ſiege to Harlech caſtle, in Merionethſhire; a fortreſs ſo ſtrong, that he deſpaired of taking it but by blockade and famine. The captain of it offered to ſurrender, on condition that Sir Richard *would do what he could to ſave his life.* The condition was accepted; and Sir Richard brought the commander to the king, requeſting his majeſty to grant him a pardon, as the expectation of this favour had induced him to yield up an important caſtle, which he might have defended. Edward replied to Sir Richard Herbert, "That as he had no power, by "his commiſſion, to pardon any one, he "might therefore, after the repreſentation "hereof to his ſovereign, deliver him up "to juſtice." Sir Richard Herbert anſwered, "He had not yet done *the beſt* "*he could for him*; and therefore moſt "humbly deſired his highneſs to do one of "two things; either to put him again in "the caſtle where he had been, and com-

"mand

" mand ſome other to take him out; or, " if his highneſs would not do ſo, to take " his life for the captain's, that being the " laſt proof he could give, that he had " uſed his utmoſt endeavour to fulfil his " promiſe." The king, finding himſelf ſo much urged, pardoned the captain, but beſtowed on Sir Richard Herbert no other reward for his ſervice*.

Theſe gentlemen, ſaid Philocles, diſplayed a delicate ſenſe of honour; and though I am dubious, whether the conduct of Monſieur Turenne has the ſanction of the great Roman caſuiſt†, yet, according to my judgment, both he and Sir Richard Herbert acted conformably to the laws of reaſon and rectitude. For every *lawful* promiſe, made by one poſſeſſing preſence of mind, and the free uſe of reaſon, no event or conſideration ſucceeding, which an un-

* See the Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

† Si prædonibus pactum pro capite pretium non attuleris, nulla fraus eſt, ne ſi juratus quidem id non feceris. Cic. de Off. lib. III. cap. 29.

biaſſed

biaſſed underſtanding would deem ſufficient to render it *unlawful*, ought to be religiouſly obſerved*. But promiſes, extorted by fear, and that clearly contravene our duty to ſociety, are void in themſelves: Thus an engagement made with ſincerity, under the ſtrong impreſſions of terror, to a highwayman or murderer, not to bear teſtimony againſt him, can be of no validity; becauſe there ſubſiſts an antecedent claim of the community, which cannot be diſpenſed with by any of its members. I have ſuppoſed the engagement to be ſincere; for, if entered into with a previous deſign of violation, a breach of truth and faithfulneſs is in ſome degree committed, notwithſtanding its injuſtice or illegality.

But when you deliver to another as a certain truth, what you believe to be falſe, are you guilty of lying, ſhould it afterwards prove to be true?

Yes, anſwered Sophron; becauſe my intention is to deceive, and to make a ſup-

* See Grove's Mor. Philoſophy.

poſed

poſed falſehood paſs for truth. Chian-fu was an officer in the guards of the emperor of Japan. He had formed a tender connection with one of the ladies of the court, and was on the point of marriage, when a formidable inſurrection, in a diſtant iſland of the empire, occaſioned by the tyranny and cruel exactions of the government, obliged him to leave the capital without delay, to aſſume his poſt in the royal army. The war was protracted through various cauſes; and he bore, with great impatience, ſo long an abſence from his miſtreſs. By the influence of a bribe, he obtained permiſſion from the commander in chief to return to Jeddo, for a few weeks; during which time he hoped to celebrate his nuptials. But dreading leſt the emperor ſhould reſent his deſertion of the army, at ſo critical a conjuncture, he pretended that he brought tidings, from the general, of an important advantage, gained over the enemy; which was likely ſoon to be ſucceeded by a complete victory. Theſe accounts were founded on probability, not on truth. His falſe-

hoods,

hoods, however, procured him the moſt favourable reception at court. He married the lady; and after a week ſpent in feſtivity, prepared for his departure to join the army. An expreſs at this time arrived, with the news of the entire defeat of the inſurgents; but no mention was made of any previous deſpatches by Chian-fu. The emperor ſuſpected that he had been guilty of deceit. He was ſtrictly examined; confeſſed his crime, and the motives of it; and was condemned to ſuffer immediate death. For lying is a capital offence, by the laws of Japan.

If truth, reſumed Philocles, be an agreement between our words and thoughts, are you under an obligation to expreſs all your thoughts?

No, ſaid Sophron, prudence often forbids it; and it is no violation of truth to conceal thoſe thoughts, or that knowledge, with which another has no right to be acquainted. On a particular occaſion, the

Jews

Jews demanded of Jeſus, *What ſign ſheweſt thou unto us? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up. Then ſaid the Jews, Forty and ſix years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he ſpake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was ariſen from the dead, his diſciples remembered that he had ſaid this unto them**.

Sometimes, when improper or treacherous queſtions are aſked, ſilence would be no leſs dangerous, than an explicit declaration of our ſentiments. In theſe caſes, we ſhall be juſtified in the uſe of ſuch evaſions, as do not contradict the truth. When the chief prieſts and ſcribes inquired of our Saviour, whether it was lawful to pay tribute unto Cæſar? *He perceived their craftineſs, and ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny: Whoſe image and ſuperſcription hath it? They anſwered and ſaid, Cæſar's. And he ſaid unto them, Render*

* John, chap. ii. ver. 18.

unto Cæſar the things which be Cæſar's, and unto GOD *the things which be* GOD's. *And they could not take hold of his words before the people: And they marvelled at his anſwers, and held their peace.*

Under the reign of the cruel and bigoted queen Mary, the princeſs Elizabeth, her ſiſter, ſuffered a variety of perſecutions, on account of her ſteady attachment to the Proteſtant religion. It is ſaid, ſhe was one day interrogated concerning the Lord's Supper; and that ſhe returned the following prudent, and evaſive anſwer:

" Chriſt was the word that ſpake it;
" He took the bread and brake it;
" And what the word did make it,
" That I believe and take it*."

Philocles expreſſed much ſatisfaction in the judicious diſtinction, which his pupil had made, and obſerved, that the conduct of the princeſs Elizabeth is fully juſtified by the example of the apoſtle Paul, in circum-

* Walpole's Cat. of Royal and Noble Authors.

ſtances

ſtances not very diſſimilar. The Athenians had a law, which rendered it capital to promulgate any new divinities*. And when Paul preached to them JESUS and the RESURRECTION, he was accuſed of having broken this law, and of being a *ſetter forth of ſtrange gods*; and was carried before the Areopagus, a court of judicature, which took cogniſance of all criminal matters, and was in a particular manner, charged with the care of the eſtabliſhed religion. An impoſtor, in ſuch a ſituation, would have retracted his doctrine to ſave his life; and an enthuſiaſt would have ſacrificed his life, without attempting to ſave it by innocent means. But the Apoſtle wiſely avoided both extremes; and availing himſelf of an inſcription "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD," which he had ſeen upon an altar in the city, he pleaded in his own defence, *Whom ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you.* By this preſence of mind, he evaded the law, and eſcaped condemnation, without

* Socrates ſuffered under this law.

departing from the truth of the Goſpel, or violating the honour of God*.

Though I am no general admirer, continued Philocles, of the maxims of morality delivered by Lord Cheſterfield, yet I think his remarks on the preſent ſubject peculiarly worthy of attention. "The prudence and neceſſity," ſays the noble author, "of frequently concealing "the truth, inſenſibly ſeduces people to "violate it. It is the only art of mean "capacities, and the only refuge of mean "ſpirits. Whereas concealing the truth, "upon proper occaſions, is as prudent "and as innocent, as telling a lie, upon "any occaſion, is infamous and fooliſh. "I will ſtate you a caſe in your own "department. Suppoſe you are em-"ployed at a foreign court, and that "the miniſter of that court is abſurd or "impertinent enough to aſk you, what

* Vid. Acts xvii. 23. Alſo Lord Lyttelton's Obſervations on the Converſion and Apoſtleſhip of St. Paul.

"your

"your inſtructions are; will you tell
"him a lie, which as ſoon as found out,
"and found out it certainly will be,
"muſt deſtroy your credit, blaſt your
"character, and render you uſeleſs there?
"No. Will you tell him the truth then,
"and betray your truſt? As certainly,
"No. But you will anſwer, with firm-
"neſs, That you are ſurprized at ſuch
"a queſtion; that you are perſuaded he
"does not expect an anſwer to it; but
"that at all events he certainly will not
"have one. Such an anſwer will give
"him confidence in you; he will con-
"ceive an opinion of your veracity, of
"which opinion you may afterwards
"make very honeſt and fair advantages."

Philocles proceeded to interrogate his pupil, whether falſity, when in jeſt, is to be deemed a lie? But Sophron declined the queſtion, as too nice for his deciſion; and deſired to hear the ſentiments of Philocles, who delivered them in the following terms. Wit and irony, raillery and humour, are

often deviations from the ſtrict rules of veracity: But they are allowed by common conſent; and, under proper reſtrictions, they contribute to enliven converſation, and to improve our manners. But jocularity is certainly culpable, and may be deemed a ſpecies of lying, when it is intended to deceive, without any good end in view; and eſpecially with the ungenerous one of diverting ourſelves at the painful expence of another. The practice alſo may lead to more criminal falſehoods; and it is related with honour of Ariſtides, that he held truth to be ſo ſacred, *ut ne joco quidem mentiretur.*

Some jocular lies have produced the moſt ſerious and affecting conſequences; of which I will give you an example or two, in the youthful frolics of Hilario, a nobleman who now looks back, with ſorrow and regret, on the ſufferings occaſioned by his levity. When he was a ſtudent at Cambridge, he went at midnight crying *fire! fire!* to the chamber door of one of the fellows of ———, a gentleman univerſally admired for

for his literary and poetical abilities, but who was of a timid and melancholy diſpoſition. The gentleman awaked out of a ſound ſleep, and, attentive only to the firſt ſuggeſtions of fear, leaped through the window, at the hazard of loſing his life by the fall. Not long after this tranſaction, Hilario went up to London; and dining in a mixed company of perſons of faſhion, he happened to ſit near a grave old gentleman, who took the firſt opportunity of making particular inquiries concerning a youth, then at Cambridge, whom he knew to be intimately acquainted with this nobleman. Hilario inſtantly ſuſpected, that the ſerious Don was a rich uncle of his friend; and determined that he would give ſuch an account of the nephew, as ſhould occaſion a ſolemn letter of reproof, over which he hoped to regale himſelf, on his return to college. He therefore jocularly ſaid, that his companion was a fine jolly fellow, always forming connections with the girls; that he loved to rattle the dice; and that he had lately loſt his next quarter's allowance,

which would lower his courage at play, for ſome time to come. From the alteration which he perceived in the ſtranger's countenance, he was aſſured of the ſucceſs of his *hum*, an abſurd term given to this ſhameful kind of lie: And, when he got back to Cambridge, he haſtened to the apartment of his friend, to enjoy the laughter which he ſhould raiſe at his expence. But how was he ſhocked to find him in the delirium of a fever, occaſioned by a billet, which had been delivered the preceding day, purporting, "That Lucinda had juſt beſtowed her "hand, upon a perſon much more deſerving "of her affections, than he had been repre- "ſented to her father by Hilario, his aſſo- "ciate in pleaſure, extravagance, and profli- "gacy."

By ſuch thoughtleſs, and unjuſtifiable violations of truth, Hilario was often wounding his own peace of mind, and involving his connections in diſtreſs. He was, however, at length compelled to correct this criminal habit, through the horror which he felt,

felt, on having given riſe to a fatal duel between two brothers, by jocularly inſinuating to one of them, that he was rivalled in the affections of his miſtreſs, by the other.

It would be happy, ſaid I, if we could aſcertain the reſtrictions, under which theſe ſallies of frolic and jocularity may be indulged with innocence. One general rule may, I think, be admitted, that the entertainment, which we thus create to ourſelves, ſhould be ſuch only as will be a future ſubject of mirth even to thoſe, who are the preſent ſufferers by it. But, to uſe the words of an excellent moraliſt, "as every "action may produce effects, over which "human power has no influence, and which "human ſagacity cannot foreſee; we ſhould "not lightly venture to the verge of evil; "nor ſtrike at others, though with a reed, "leſt, like the rod of Moſes, it become a "ſerpent in our hands*."

Philocles now purſued the ſubject, by inquiring into the nature of EQUIVOCA-

* Dr. Hawkſworth.

TION;

TION; which Sophron defined to be a mean expedient to avoid the declaration of truth, without verbally telling a lie. An equivocation, ſaid he, conſiſts of ſuch expreſſions, as admit of more than one meaning. The ſpeaker uſes them in one ſenſe, and deſigns that the hearer ſhould underſtand them in another. Cicero mentions a certain perſon, who made a truce with the enemy for thirty days, and treacherouſly evaded his agreement, by laying waſte the country during the nights; alleging, that the truce was for ſo many *days*, not nights*. Such an equivocation as this, has all the guilt, and infamy of a lie; but I do not feel myſelf inclined to condemn the duplicity, practiſed by a gentleman, on the following occaſion. He was returning home from the aſſizes at York, and was attacked on the road by a highwayman, to whom he delivered a ſmall purſe of money. The robber told him, that he

* Vid. Cicero de Officiis, lib. I. cap. 13.

ſhould

ſhould not be ſatisfied with a few guineas; and ſternly demanded the ſum, which he knew he had received, and then carried about him. The gentleman, with great apparent terror, drew out of his pocket a leathern bag, and giving it to the highwayman, ſaid, "*Take what you want*, but ſpare my life." The robber eagerly received it, and was tranſported with the value of his acquiſition. He rode off with it, through bye lanes, till he arrived at a place of ſecurity. There he ſtopped to examine his booty, which to his aſtoniſhment he found to conſiſt only of a quantity of halfpence, together with a copy of the dying ſpeech and earneſt exhortations of a malefactor, who had been executed the preceding day for robbery.

Can you acquit me, Philocles, ſaid I, of the criminality of equivocation, when, in the exerciſe of my profeſſional duties, I ſtudy, by cheerful looks and ambiguous words, to remove from my patients the

the horrors of deſpair, to mitigate the apprehenſions of danger, and to deceive them into hope; that, by adminiſtering a cordial to the drooping ſpirit, I may ſmooth the bed of death, or revive even expiring life? For there are maladies, which rob the Philoſopher of fortitude, and the Chriſtian of conſolation.

From my heart I acquit you, anſwered Philocles, with his wonted humanity. You do a kindneſs, not a wrong, to the perſon whom you thus deceive; and may reaſonably preſuppoſe his future approbation of that conduct, which meets with the preſent acquieſcence of all his friends. The amiable and elegant Pliny, who had the niceſt ſenſe of honour, recites with applauſe, in a letter to Nepos, a ſtory, which may perhaps contribute to ſatisfy your mind, and remove your ſcruples.

The huſband of the celebrated Arria, Cæcinna Pætus, was very dangerouſly ill.

ill. Her ſon was alſo ſick at the ſame time; and died. He was a youth of uncommon accompliſhments, and fondly beloved by his parents. Arria prepared and conducted his funeral in ſuch a manner, that her huſband remained entirely ignorant of the mournful event, which occaſioned that ſolemnity. Pætus often inquired, with anxiety, about his ſon; to whom ſhe cheerfully replied, that he had ſlept well, and was better. But if her tears, too long reſtrained, were burſting forth, ſhe inſtantly retired, to give vent to her grief; and when again compoſed, ſhe returned to Pætus with dry eyes, and a placid countenance, quitting, as it were, all the tender feelings of the mother, at the threſhold of her huſband's chamber*.

But, addreſſing himſelf to Sophron, is it not a ſpecies of equivocation, and a breach of faithfulneſs, continued Philocles, when we do not perform our

* Plin. Epiſt. XVI. lib. III.

promiſes,

promiſes, according to the plain and obvious meaning of them?

Without doubt it is, anſwered Sophron. The moraliſt whom I before quoted, relates, that ten Romans, who had been taken in the battle of Cannæ, were ſent by Hannibal to the ſenate, to propoſe an exchange of priſoners. Before they ſet out, each of them engaged, by an oath, to return to the camp of the Carthaginians, if the embaſſy ſhould prove ineffectual. The ſenate rejected the offers of Hannibal; and nine of the priſoners honourably rendered themſelves up to him. But the tenth refuſed to return, on pretence, that he had already diſcharged himſelf of his oath. For it ſeems, that he went back to the camp of the Carthaginians, ſoon after he quitted it, to fetch ſome neceſſaries, which he had deſignedly left behind, that he might be able to plead his having complied, literally, with the terms of his engagement. But the ſenate diſdained the deceit,

ceit, and commanded the artful wretch to be ſent bound to Hannibal.

Mental, and other private reſervations neither abſolve, nor even extenuate the guilt of lying. When the unfortunate Mary, queen of Scotland, was married to the dauphin of France, the king, his father, ſolemnly ratified every article, inſiſted upon by the Scotch parliament, for preſerving the independence of their nation, and for ſecuring the ſucceſſion of the crown to the houſe of Hamilton. But Mary, by his perſuaſion, had antecedently and privately ſubſcribed three deeds, by which, ſhe conſigned the kingdom of Scotland, on failure of her own iſſue, to his family; declaring all her promiſes, to the contrary, to be void*. The remark of Biſhop Taylor may be adopted, as the beſt comment on tranſactions of this infamous nature. If the words be a *lie* without *reſervation*, they

* Lord Kaims's Hiſtory of Man, vol. IV. p. 158.

are

are ſo with it: For this does not alter the words themſelves; nor the meaning of the words; nor the purpoſe of him who delivers them*.

But in what light are we to regard the ſtratagems, falſehood, and acts of deceit, which have been employed in war, and often with applauſe, both in ancient and modern times?

In reply to this intereſting queſtion, Philocles obſerved, that war is ſeldom founded in juſtice; and that, therefore, we cannot be ſurprized that it ſhould occaſion, amongſt thoſe who wage it, a ſuſpenſion of the common laws of morality. The fraudulent exploits which are practiſed, by the tacit conſent, as it were, of the parties, may dazzle and ſurprize a ſuperficial obſerver; but a ſerious, honeſt mind, will generally condemn them, as inconſiſtent with the obligations of religion and virtue; and, except under very

* Doctor Dubitant. p. 498.

particular

particular circumſtances, injurious to the contending powers themſelves. For, as integrity is the beſt policy in the conduct of individuals towards each other, it will appear to be equally ſo in the tranſactions between ſtates, and communities, if an extenſive view be taken of their great and permanent intereſts. Cicero, in one of his dialogues, introduces Scipio as maintaining the following excellent maxim: *non modo* FALSUM *eſſe illud,* SINE INJURIA *non poſſe, ſed hoc veriſſimum, ſine* SUMMA JUSTITIA *rempublicam regi non poſſe.* "It is ſo far from being true, that "government cannot be carried on with-"out injury to others, that nothing is "more certain, than that it cannot be "well adminiſtered without an inviolable "adherence to the ſtricteſt juſtice." And the propriety of this obſervation ſeems to be acknowledged, in ſome of the regulations of war, now univerſally adopted in civilized countries.

But a diſtinction ſhould be made, between art or ſtratagem, and perfidy or

falſehood*. The wiſeſt and beſt moraliſts admit, that we may deceive our enemies, when we have a juſt cauſe of war, by any ſuch ſigns, as import no profeſſion of communicating our ſentiments to them. Thus I have heard, that the duke of Marlborough, when he commanded the allied army in Germany, called a council of war, on a particular occaſion, to determine whether he ſhould attack the enemy on the ſucceeding day. His general officers were unanimous in recommending the meaſure; but the duke expreſſed his objections to it in the ſtrongeſt terms; and the council ſubmitted to his ſuperior judgment. When he retired into his tent, prince Eugene followed him, and lamented the diſgrace, in which ſuch a deciſion would involve them. "My reſolution," ſaid the duke, "is fixed to give battle to-morrow; and I "ſhall inſtantly iſſue the neceſſary orders. "But I oppoſed this plan in council, be- "cauſe I had received ſecret information,

* See Appendix, Sect. VI.

"that

" that our enemies had concerted the means " of becoming acquainted with the reſult " of our deliberations. And you will agree " with me in the neceſſity of deceiving " them."

But men of true courage and honour, muſt hold in deteſtation all treachery and falſehood. The earl of Peterborough, in conjunction with the prince of Darmſtadt, carried on the ſiege of Barcelona, about the beginning of the preſent century. The governor offered to capitulate, and came to a parley with lord Peterborough at the gates of the city. The articles were not yet ſigned; when ſuddenly loud ſhouts and huzzas were heard in the town. " You " have perfidiouſly betrayed us!" ſaid the governor to the earl: " Whilſt we are ca- " pitulating, with unſuſpecting honour and " ſincerity, your Engliſh ſoldiers have en- " tered the city by the ramparts; and are " now committing rapine, murder, and " every kind of violence." " You do injuſ- " tice to the Engliſh," replied the general:

"This treachery is chargeable only on the "troops of Darmſtadt. But permit me to "enter into the town with my ſoldiers, and "I will inſtantly repreſs the outrage, and "return to the gate to finiſh the capitu-"lation."

The offer was made with an air of truth, and ſincerity; and accepted with a generous confidence. Peterborough haſtened into the ſtreets, where he found the Germans and Catalans pillaging the houſes of the principal inhabitants. He drove them away; and obliged them to leave the booty, which they were carrying off: And, after having quieted all diſturbances, he rejoined the governor, and completed the capitulation, without demanding any new, or more advantageous terms. The Spaniards were aſtoniſhed at the magnanimity of the Engliſh, whom they had generally regarded before as faithleſs barbarians*.

* See Voltaire's Siecle de Louis XIV.

Sophron

Sophron remarked, that the glory, on this occaſion, appeared to belong chiefly to lord Peterborough, as an individual. But I recollect, continued he, a tranſaction in the Grecian hiſtory, which ſeems to evince an equal ſenſe of honour, and deteſtation of perfidy, in the whole body of the Athenians. Theſe people were inflamed with the ambition of governing Greece; and Themiſtocles, a favourite general, exerted all his talents to accompliſh the deſign. One day he aſſembled the citizens of Athens, and informed them, he had a moſt important plan to propoſe; but that he could not communicate it to them, becauſe the ſucceſs of it depended upon ſecrecy. He therefore requeſted them to appoint a confidential perſon, to whom he might explain his views, and whoſe approbation of them might have the force of public authority. Ariſtides was unanimouſly choſen; and Themiſtocles laid open to him the project, which he had conceived, of burning the whole fleet of the Gre-

cian ſtates, then lying unguarded in a neighbouring port; the deſtruction of which, he ſaid, could not fail to ſecure the dominion of Athens. Ariſtides returned to the aſſembly, and declared, that the project of Themiſtocles promiſed the greateſt benefit to the commonwealth; but that it was perfidious and unjuſt. The people inſtantly, and with one voice, rejected the propoſal. But the Athenians were ſoon afterwards corrupted by proſperity: And Thucydides informs us, it became, with them, a maxim of ſtate, "that nothing is diſhonourable, which is advantageous*."

Here I could not forbear to mention a noble, and long-continued exertion of public faith and commercial honour, though it was a ſlight digreſſion from the topic of diſcourſe. The Spaniſh galeons, deſtined to ſupply Terra Firma, and the kingdoms of Peru and Chili,

* Thucydid. lib. VI.

with

with almoſt every article of neceſſary conſumption, touch firſt at Carthagena, and then at Porto-Bello. In the latter place a fair is opened; the wealth of America is exchanged for the manufactures of Europe; and during its preſcribed term of forty days, the richeſt traffic on the face of the earth is begun and finiſhed, with unbounded confidence, and the utmoſt ſimplicity of tranſaction. No bale of goods is ever opened, no cheſt of treaſure is examined. Both are received on the credit of the perſons to whom they belong; and only one inſtance of fraud is recorded, during the long period in which trade was carried on with this liberal confidence. All the coined ſilver which was brought from Peru to Porto-Bello in the year 1654, was found to be adulterated, and to be mingled with a fifth part of baſe metal. The Spaniſh merchants, with their uſual integrity, ſuſtained the whole loſs, and indemnified the foreigners by whom they were employed. The fraud was detected;

and the treaſurer of the revenue in Peru, the author of it, was publicly burnt*.

Are we not every day guilty of lying, purſued Philocles, in the common forms of civility; and in various modes of ſpeech, which cuſtom has introduced?

Surely not, replied Sophron; for if theſe be well underſtood, no one is deceived by them.

I do not entirely accord with you, Sophron, ſaid I; and I believe it will not be eaſy to juſtify, upon the principles either of wiſdom or ſtrict morality, many complimental expreſſions uſed in converſation. You remember the letter of the ambaſſador from Bantam, which is inſerted in one of the volumes of the Spectator. This honeſt ſtranger informs his maſter, that the people of England call him and his ſubjects barbarians, becauſe they ſpeak the truth; and

* Robertſon's Hiſt. of America, vol. II. note 93. B. VIII.

account

account themſelves polite and civilized, becauſe they ſay one thing, and mean another. "On my firſt landing," ſays he, "one told "me that he ſhould be glad to do me any "ſervice in his power. I deſired him there-"fore to carry my portmanteau; but in-"ſtead of ſerving me according to his pro-"miſe, he laughed, and ordered another "to do it. I lodged the firſt week at the "houſe of a perſon, who intreated me to "think myſelf at home, and to conſider his "houſe as my own. Accordingly, the next "morning I began to knock down one "of the walls, in order to let in the freſh "air; and packed up ſome of the houſehold "goods, of which I intended to make thee "a preſent. But the falſe varlet ſoon ſent "me word, that he would have no ſuch "doings in his houſe." Perhaps, however, I may incur the charge of falſehood, by quoting the letter of an ambaſſador, who never exiſted.

Such fictions, Philocles remarked, partake not of the nature of lies. They are intended

intended to convey amuſement or inſtruction, not to ſerve the purpoſes of deceit.

Nor is the caſe eſſentially different, with reſpect to the common forms of civility. Their import is known to all who uſe them; and, as they are expreſſive of urbanity and benevolence, they tend, under proper reſtrictions, to ſoften the aſperities, and heighten the pleaſures of ſocial intercourſe. Genuine courteſy has, indeed, its ſeat in the heart; and implies the deſire of gratifying others, in the ſubordinate offices of life, by the ſacrifice of our own eaſe or intereſt. It is eſſential, therefore, to every amiable character; and can only diſplay itſelf in ſuch appropriated modes as cuſtom has eſtabliſhed in different countries, or amongſt different ranks of men. But, when the *ſubſtance* is wanting, ſome benefit is derived to the world even from its *forms*: And to the ruſtic, who claims the privilege of ſpeaking improper truths, or of acting with rude and malicious ſincerity, we may juſtly addreſs the words of Shakeſpeare:

- - - - - - - - - - - - " This is ſome fellow,
" Who, having been praiſed for bluntneſs, doth affect
" A ſaucy roughneſs, and conſtrains the garb
" Quite from his nature. He can't flatter, he,
" An honeſt mind and plain; he muſt ſpeak truth,
" An they will take it ſo; if not, 'tis plain."

On this account, I cannot but condemn the affected ſeverity of Paulinus, biſhop of Nola, who reproves his correſpondent Sulpicius Severus, for having ſubſcribed himſelf his ſervant. " Beware," ſays this primitive writer, " thou ſubſcribe not thy-
" ſelf HIS SERVANT, who is thy BROTHER;
" for flattery is ſinful; and it is not a teſ-
" timony of humility, to give thoſe ho-
" nours to men, which are only due to the
" One Lord, Maſter, and God*." We find the patriarch Abraham actuated by no ſuch ſcruples, though he lived in the period of paſtoral ſimplicity, and was highly diſtinguiſhed for his virtue and integrity. *And he lift up his eyes, and looked; and lo, three men ſtood by him: And when he ſaw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door,*

* See Barclay's Apology, p. 525.

and

and bowed himſelf toward the ground; and ſaid, My lord, if now I have found favour in thy ſight, paſs not away, I pray thee, from thy ſervant.*

Lot, alſo, is repreſented in the book of Geneſis, as accoſting, in ſimilar terms, two ſtrangers, with whoſe dignity he was then unacquainted. *And he ſaid, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your ſervant's houſe, and tarry all night, and waſh your feet; and ye ſhall riſe up early, and go on your ways†.*

The conduct and expreſſions of theſe venerable patriarchs, might, I obſerved, be perfectly conſiſtent with the niceſt adherence to truth and ſincerity. For though they ſtyled themſelves the *ſervants* of the ſtrangers, whom they addreſſed, they could not mean to extend the term beyond ſuch *ſervices*, as the laws of hoſpitality required.

* Geneſis, chap. xviii. ver. 2, 3.

† Geneſis, chap. xix. ver. 2.

Similar

Similar laws, anſwered Philocles, which general conſent has eſtabliſhed, bind every man, in the common intercourſe of life, to reſtrain his angry paſſions, to ſilence his ſevere judgments, to ſuppreſs his pride and arrogance, and not only to correct whatever is offenſive in his manners, but to ſhew that urbanity of ſpirit, which, by its benevolent attentions, contributes to alleviate miſery, and to increaſe the ſum of public happineſs and order, Miſtake me not, however, by ſuppoſing that I would recommend forward profeſſions, a fawning demeanour, or unlimited complaiſance. Integrity of heart, and ſteadineſs of principle, forbid all ſinful conformity with the world: And I would neither flatter folly, countenance vice, nor yield up one important duty to artificial politeneſs. But the ſacrifice of my own pride, reſentment, caprice, or ill nature, to ſocial eaſe and enjoyment, may often be required: And he, who, like Diogenes, neither poſſeſſes the ſubſtance, nor the form of courteſy, ſhould be baniſhed from the world. This Cynic, you remember, when he

he paid a viſit to Plato, who united a taſte for elegance with the love of philoſophy, exulted in the rudeneſs of reproof, and bedaubing with his dirty feet the fine carpet, which covered the floor, cried out, "Thus I trample on the pride of Plato." "But with far greater pride," retorted Plato, with a ſarcaſtic ſeverity, which the occaſion fully juſtified. Lord Bacon mentions two noblemen of his acquaintance, one of whom kept a very magnificent table, but treated his gueſts with illiberal freedom: The other, when he entertained the ſame gueſts, probably with humbler cheer, but more politeneſs, uſed to aſk them, "Tell truly, was "there never a flout, or dry blow given at "my lord's table?" To which the gueſts anſwered, "Such and ſuch a thing paſſed." "I thought," ſaid this nobleman, "he would "mar a good dinner*."

Urbanity has been admirably characterized, by a celebrated writer, under the

* Bacon's Eſſays, XXXII.

appellation

appellation of GENTLENESS. "This virtue," he obſerves, "is founded on a ſenſe of what "we owe to Him who made us, and to the "common nature of which we all ſhare. "It ariſes from reflection on our own fai-"lures and wants; and from juſt views of "the condition and the duty of man. It "is native feeling, heightened, and im-"proved by principle. It is the heart, "which eaſily relents; which feels for every "thing that is human; and is backward "and ſlow to inflict the leaſt wound. It "is affable in its addreſs, and mild in its "demeanour; ever ready to oblige, and "willing to be obliged by others; breathing "habitual kindneſs towards friends, courteſy "to ſtrangers, long ſuffering to enemies. "It exerciſes authority with moderation; "adminiſters reproof with tenderneſs; con-"fers favours with eaſe and modeſty. It "is unaſſuming in opinion, and temperate "in zeal. It contends not eagerly about "trifles; is ſlow to contradict, and ſtill "ſlower to blame; but prompt to allay "diſſention, and to reſtore peace. It nei-

"ther

" ther intermeddles unneceſſarily with the " affairs, nor pries inquiſitively into the " ſecrets, of others. It delights above all " things to alleviate diſtreſs, and, if it can- " not dry up the falling tear, to ſooth at " leaſt the grieving heart. Where it has " not the power of being uſeful, it is never " burdenſome. It ſeeks to pleaſe, rather " than to ſhine and dazzle; and conceals " with care that ſuperiority, either of talents " or of rank, which is oppreſſive to thoſe " who are beneath it. In a word, it is that " ſpirit, and that tenour of manners, which " the Goſpel of Chriſt enjoins, when it com- " mands us *to bear one another's burdens*; *to* " *rejoice with thoſe who rejoice, and to weep* " *with thoſe who weep*; *to pleaſe every one* " *his neighbour for his good*; *to be kind and* " *tender-hearted*; *to be pitiful and courteous*; " *to ſupport the weak, and to be patient to-* " *wards all men**."

Sophron appeared to be much impreſſed with this animated and ſtriking picture of

* Blair's Sermons, vol. I. p. 150.

courteſy;

courteſy; but he ſuggeſted to Philocles, that amongſt the inferior offices of ſocial life, he had not noticed the duties of COUNSEL and REPROOF. Theſe, ſaid he, I fear, cannot be adminiſtered by a mind under the influence of gentleneſs, without the concealment, and ſometimes, even the violation of truth.

The former part of your allegation, replied Philocles, may perhaps be granted; but the latter I cannot admit. Advice and reprehenſion require, indeed, the utmoſt delicacy; and painful truths ſhould be delivered in the ſofteſt terms, and expreſſed no farther, than is neceſſary to produce their due effect. A courteous man will alſo mix what is conciliating, with what is offenſive; praiſe, with cenſure; deference and reſpect, with the authority of admonition, ſo far as theſe can be done in conſiſtency with probity and honour. For the mind revolts againſt all cenſorian power, which diſplays pride or pleaſure in finding fault; and is wounded by the bare ſuſpicion of ſuch diſ-

graceful tyranny. But advice, diveſted of the harſhneſs, and yet retaining the honeſt warmth, of truth, "is like honey, put round the brim of a veſſel full of wormwood*." Even this vehicle, however, is ſometimes inſufficient to conceal the draught of bitterneſs; of which we are furniſhed with an admirable and diverting inſtance, in the hiſtory of Gil Blas. This young man became the favourite of the archbiſhop of Grenada; in whoſe family he enjoyed a lucrative and agreeable office; and future proſpects of much higher preferment. The archbiſhop regarded him as a perſon of taſte and ſentiment; and one day entered into the following converſation with him. "Liſ-
"ten, with attention, to what I am going
"to deliver. My chief pleaſure conſiſts
"in preaching; the Lord gives a bleſſing
"to my homilies; they touch the hearts of
"ſinners; make them ſeriouſly reflect on
"their conduct, and have recourſe to inſtant
"repentance. This ſucceſs ſhould alone be

* Memoirs of Brandenburgh, by the King of Pruſſia.

"a ſufficient

" a ſufficient incitement to my ſtudies:
" Nevertheleſs, I will confeſs to thee my
" weakneſs, and acknowledge, that I pro-
" poſe to myſelf another reward; a reward,
" with which the delicacy of my nature re-
" proaches me in vain. The honour of
" being reckoned a perfect orator, has
" charmed my imagination: My perform-
" ances are thought equally nervous and
" refined; but I am anxious to avoid the
" misfortune of thoſe who write too long;
" and I wiſh to retire without forfeiting one
" tittle of my reputation. Wherefore, my
" dear Gil Blas, what I exact of thy zeal,
" is, that whenever thou ſhalt perceive a
" failure in my genius, or the leaſt mark of
" the imbecility of old age in my com-
" poſitions, that thou wilt immediately ad-
" vertiſe me of it. I dare not truſt to my
" own judgment, which may be ſeduced by
" ſelf-love; but make choice of thine, be-
" cauſe I know it to be good, and am re-
" ſolved to ſtand by thy deciſion."

Some time after this diſcourſe, the prelate was ſeized with a fit of apoplexy. He

was, however, ſoon relieved; and ſuch ſalutary medicines were adminiſtered, that his health ſeemed to be re-eſtabliſhed. But his underſtanding ſuffered a ſevere ſhock, which was plainly perceptible in the firſt homily that he compoſed. The ſucceeding one proved perfectly deciſive; as it abounded in repetitions, vain arguments, and falſe pathos. "Now," ſaid Gil Blas to himſelf, "maſter homily-critic, prepare "to exerciſe the office, which you have "undertaken. You ſee that the faculties "of his grace begin to fail. It is your "duty to give him notice of it, not only as "the depoſitory of his thoughts, but like-"wiſe, leſt you ſhould be anticipated by "ſome other of his friends." But the embarraſſment was, how to convey the mortifying intimation to his patron. Fortunately, the archbiſhop extricated him from the difficulty, by inquiring, what people ſaid of him, and if they were ſatisfied with his laſt diſcourſe. Gil Blas anſwered, that the homily had not ſucceeded ſo well as the others, in affecting the audience.

"How,"

"How," replied the prelate, with aſtoniſhment, "has it met with any Ariſtarchus?" "No, ſir," ſaid Gil Blas, "by no means: "But ſince you have laid your injunctions "upon me to be open and ſincere, I will "take the liberty of telling you, that your "late diſcourſe, in my judgment, has not "altogether the energy of your prior per-"formances." The archbiſhop grew pale at theſe words; and ſaid, with a forced ſmile, "So then, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece "is not to your taſte? You think my "underſtanding enfeebled, don't you?" "I ſhould not have ſpoken ſo freely," anſwered Gil Blas, "if your grace had not "commanded me. I do no more, there-"fore, than obey you; and I moſt humbly "beg that you will not be offended at my "freedom." "God forbid," cried the prelate, with precipitation; "God forbid, "that I ſhould find fault with it. This "would be extremely unjuſt. I am not "angry, that you ſpeak your ſentiments: "it is the ſentiment only that I condemn. "Know, that I never compoſed a better

" homily, than that, of which you diſapprove; " for my genius, thank heaven, hath yet " loſt nothing of its vigour. Henceforth, " however, I will chooſe an abler confi- " dant than you are. Go," added he, puſhing Gil Blas out of his cloſet, by the ſhoulders; " go, tell my treaſurer to give you a " hundred ducats. I wiſh you all manner " of proſperity, with a little more taſte*."

But we have enlarged ſufficiently on this part of our ſubject. Permit me, therefore, Sophron, to proceed, by inquiring, whether SECRECY, in certain caſes, be not a branch of faithfulneſs, or veracity?

It is a very important one, anſwered Sophron. To betray the confidence that is repoſed in us, whether we have tacitly, or by a promiſe, bound ourſelves to fidelity, evinces a weak underſtanding, or a bad heart. Levity, an eagerneſs to communicate, or the deſire of ſeeming to be important, are the moſt frequent cauſes of the

* Gil Blas, vol. III.

breach

breach of ſecrecy; but it is to be feared, that it ſometimes originates from baſeneſs and malevolence.

This offence was deemed infamous by the ancient Perſians. For it was their opinion, ſays Quintus Curtius, that however deficient a man might be in the talents, requiſite to the attainment of excellency, the negative virtues were, at leaſt, in his power; and that he might be ſilent, although he could not be eloquent.

Here Philocles judiciouſly remarked, that the laws of ſecrecy are not, in all caſes, to be regarded as inviolable; for we are under antecedent obligations, of a nature ſtill more forcible and binding. If any atrocious deſign, either againſt an individual or the ſtate, be communicated in confidence to us, it is our duty to diſſuade the party, if poſſible, from the execution of it. But ſhould our endeavours appear to be unavailing, the concealment of what we know, might involve us in the guilt of the offence; and

we ſhould be juſtly puniſhable, as acceſſaries to the crime. At Florence, and in other ſtates of Italy, a man appriſed of a plot againſt the government, is put to death for not revealing it*. In England, *miſpriſion* of *treaſon* is puniſhed, by forfeiture of rents, and of goods, and by impriſonment during life: And *miſpriſion* of *felony*, by impriſonment for a diſcretionary term, and by fine and ranſom, at the pleaſure of the king's judges†.

If ſuch *miſpriſions* be really culpable, how comes it to paſs, I aſked, that informers are almoſt univerſally held in contempt and deteſtation?

Becauſe few villains, ſaid Philocles, will communicate their wicked deſigns to any but thoſe, whom they believe inclined to participate in the commiſſion of them. Hence there is generally a preſumption of previous guilt in the informer: And to this

* Guiccardini's Hiſt.

† Blackſtone's Commentaries.

guilt,

guilt, we ſuperadd that of baſeneſs and perfidy; as we are not willing to ſuppoſe that he is influenced to perform this public act, either by motives of private virtue, or of patriotiſm. However, we ſhould be careful not to carry our prepoſſeſſion againſt informers, even of this claſs, too far. They do eſſential ſervice to the community; and may, perhaps, think this ſervice the beſt atonement for their paſt guilt, and the fulleſt proof of their preſent repentance.

There is another branch of faithfulneſs, which it is alſo diſhonourable to violate; and which lays us under an obligation to avoid TATTLING, TALE-BEARING, and CENSORIOUSNESS. In the unguarded hours of ſocial intercourſe, and ſtill more in the commerce of domeſtic life, the wiſeſt and the beſt of men ſpeak their thoughts without reſerve; and caſting off all reſtraint, may ſometimes deviate, both in their words and actions, from the rules of ſtrict propriety. To relate ſuch inadvertencies, is meanneſs;

meanneſs; to ridicule them, is ill nature; and to exaggerate them, is calumny*.

Sophron now turned our attention to a moſt important branch of moral Truth, by inquiring whether INSINCERITY in RELIGION may not be deemed a highly criminal ſpecies of lying?

Certainly it may, returned Philocles. GOD is a being of ſpotleſs purity, who ſearches the heart, and commands us to worſhip him "*in ſpirit and in truth.*" "*Lying lips,*" whether employed in falſe profeſſions of faith or of piety, "*are an abomination to the Lord.*" And he who can, habitually, practiſe inſincerity and hypocriſy, in thoſe ſerious and important tranſactions with his Creator, Benefactor, and

* Abſentem qui rodit Amicum,
Qui non defendit, alio culpante, ſolutos
Qui captat riſus hominum, famamque dicacis,
Fingere qui non viſa poteſt, commiſſa tacere
Qui nequit; hic Niger eſt; hunc tu, Romane, caveto.
Hor. lib. I. ſat. IV.

Judge,

Judge, which have eternity for their object, is not likely to pay any ſteady regard to temporary intereſts, reſulting from the laws of ſociety, or the ordinary obligations of morality. When one of the kings of France ſolicited M. Bougier, who was a proteſtant, to conform to the Roman Catholic religion, promiſing him, in return, a commiſſion or a government, "Sire," replied he, "if I could be perſuaded to betray my God for a marſhal's ſtaff, I might "be induced to betray my king for a bribe "of much leſs value."

It was a noble reply! cried Sophron, with ingenuous warmth; and the recital of it brings to my memory a ſtory, which the duke of Sully has recorded of Ambroſe Parè a zealous Huguenot, and ſurgeon to Charles the Ninth of France. He was with the king, during the time of the maſſacre of Paris, when ſo many thouſand innocent and virtuous perſons were inhumanly butchered in cold blood; and was perhaps a witneſs of the monarch's firing with a carabine,

bine, upon the wretched Calviniſts, who fled from their murderers by the windows of the palace. The courtiers, as they came into the royal preſence, vied with each other, in boaſting of the barbarities which they had committed; and Charles ſaid to Parè, whoſe religious opinions he well knew, "The time is now come, when "I ſhall have none but catholics in my "dominions." "Sire," anſwered he, without embarraſſment or perturbation, "can you forget your promiſe to me, "that I ſhould never be obliged to go "to maſs!" The duke of Sully ſeems to be of opinion, that the edict, which Charles iſſued the ſucceeding day, to prohibit the continuance of the maſſacre, was partly owing to the intrepidity and influence of Parè.

The conduct of Parè, ſaid Philocles, on ſo trying an occaſion, affords a ſtriking proof of firmneſs and ſincerity, in the profeſſion of religious faith. But examples, of much higher degrees of ſimilar fidelity,

fidelity, are to be found in the earlier annals of the Chriſtian church. Nor are inſtances wanting, even in the heathen world, of a zealous and fearleſs attachment to thoſe rites, which ignorance deemed ſacred, and which individuals or bodies of men bound themſelves, by ſolemn engagements, to perform. When the Gauls were become maſters of Rome, they beſieged the capitol, and cloſely guarded every avenue, to prevent the eſcape of a ſingle Roman citizen. Under theſe circumſtances of danger, Caius Fabius Dorſo, a young man of an illuſtrious family, deſcended from the capitol, bearing certain holy utenſils in his hands; and paſſed through the midſt of the enemy, regardleſs of their menaces, to offer a ſacrifice to the gods on the hill Quirinalis. This ſacrifice, it was the cuſtom of his anceſtors to perform yearly, on a ſtated day; and when he had finiſhed the ſolemnity, the Gauls, though a fierce and barbarous people, ſuffered him to return unmoleſted,

leſted, admiring his piety, and aſtoniſhed at his intrepidity*. Facts, like theſe, ſhould make us bluſh at indifference, and abhor diſſimulation in religion. But whilſt we allow ſuch impreſſions to produce their full influence on our hearts, let us beware of paſſing judgment upon others, with raſhneſs or unchriſtian ſeverity. Intemperate zeal is apt to beget a malignancy of ſpirit, no leſs incompatible with the love of GOD, than with benevolence to man. The conviction of the mind, in matters of faith, often depends more upon education and authority, than on the exertions of reaſon: And if we ſee men profeſſing to believe, what is unintelligible or abſurd, we ſhould be well aſſured that they have not deceived themſelves, before we accuſe them of mocking their Creator, and impoſing on the world.

We may pity ignorance, and lament credulity; but hypocriſy, urged Sophron,

* Vid. Liv. Hiſt.

merits

merits from us no indulgence: And this ſpecies of falſehood is ſo characteriſtically marked, that it cannot be miſtaken. Who, that obſerves a man ſanctified in his behaviour, and aſſiduous in his public devotions, whilſt he is at the ſame time ſelfiſh, malevolent, bigoted, and oppreſſive, will heſitate to charge him with the groſſeſt and moſt infamous diſſimulation?

If there be ſufficient proof, that this is really his temper of mind, I acknowledge, ſaid Philocles, that you may and ought to brand him with the name of hypocrite. But no man ſhould be charged with a crime univerſally odious, on ſlight or equivocal evidence. There is a ſpecies of devotion, which having its ſeat chiefly in the imagination and the paſſions, bears no exact proportion to the virtue of the character in which it is found: And charity, together with an humble ſenſe of our own infirmities, will always lead us to put the moſt favourable

conſtruction

conſtruction on the conduct of our fellow creatures. We ſhould remember alſo, that enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition have often appeared, with the external marks of diſſimulation. The famous lord Herbert, of Cherbury, had written an elaborate work againſt Chriſtianity, which he entitled, *De Veritate, prout diſtinguitur à Revelatione.* But knowing that it would meet with much oppoſition, he remained ſome time in anxious ſuſpenſe about the publication of it. Providence, however, as he informs us, kindly interpoſed, and determined his wavering reſolutions. Hear the marvellous tale, which he relates!

"Being thus doubtful in my chamber,
"one fair day in the ſummer, my caſe-
"ment being opened towards the ſouth,
"the ſun ſhining clear, and no wind
"ſtirring, I took my book *De Veritate*
"in my hand, and kneeling on my
"knees, devoutly ſaid, *O thou eternal*
"*God,*

" *God, I am not ſatisfied enough whether I* " *ſhall publiſh this book; if it be for thy* " *glory, I beſeech thee give me ſome ſign from* " *heaven; if not, I ſhall ſuppreſs it.* I had " no ſooner ſpoken theſe words, but a " loud, though yet gentle noiſe, came " from the heavens, which did ſo com- " fort and cheer me, that I took my " petition as granted, and that I had the " ſign I demanded; whereupon alſo I " reſolved to print my book *."

It muſt appear ſtrange, that a man, who had ſpent a conſiderable part of his life in courts and camps, ſhould poſſeſs ſuch a deluded imagination. And this deluſion will be ſtill more ſuſpicious, when you are told, that lord Herbert's chief argument againſt Chriſtianity is, the improbability that Heaven ſhould reveal its laws only to a portion of the earth. For how could he, who doubted of a *partial*, believe an *individual* revela-

* See the Life of Lord Herbert, written by himſelf.

tion? Or is it poſſible, that he could have the vanity to think his book of ſuch importance, as to extort a declaration of the Divine will, when the intereſt and happineſs of a fourth part of mankind, were deemed, by him, objects inadequate to the like diſplay of goodneſs*? Do theſe arguments convince you of lord Herbert's hypocriſy? Your concluſion is haſty, and unjuſt. Read his life, and you will be ſatisfied, that the warmth of his temper might expoſe him to ſelf-deception; but that he was incapable of obtruding on the world, what he knew to be a falſehood.

Sophron modeſtly acknowledged, that the ſigns of religious diſſimulation might be leſs deciſive, than he had ſuppoſed. But allow me, ſaid he, to contraſt your inſtance of lord Herbert, with two facts concerning Oliver Cromwell; to ſhew that the charge of hypocriſy may be juſtly grounded on ſingle actions, without taking into our view

* See Walpole's Cat. of Royal and Noble Authors.

the

the whole tenour of a man's life. Suppoſe a ſtranger, ignorant of the craftineſs and ambition of Cromwell, to have been preſent in the long parliament, when the ordinance for the trial of Charles I. was read and aſſented to; would he have heſitated to think him an hypocrite, after hearing him deliver the following words? "Should "any one have voluntarily propoſed to "bring the king to puniſhment, I ſhould "have regarded him, as the greateſt traitor; "but ſince Providence and neceſſity have "caſt us upon it, I will pray to God for "a bleſſing on your counſels; though I am "not prepared to give you my advice on "this important occaſion. Even I myſelf, "when I was lately offering up a petition "for his majeſty's reſtoration, felt my "tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; "and conſidered this ſupernatural move-"ment, as the anſwer which Heaven, "having rejected the king, had ſent to my "ſupplications*."

* Whitlock.

Let us farther ſuppoſe, that this ſtranger, attended the high court of juſtice, and ſaw Cromwell, when he took the pen in his hand, to ſign the warrant for the king's execution, jocularly bedaub the face of his neighbour with the ink; could he forbear to expreſs his diſguſt at the levity which he then obſerved; and his abhorrence of the groſs diſſimulation, to which he had been before a witneſs?

You have drawn your example, replied Philocles, from that diſtracted period of our hiſtory, when truth appears to have been baniſhed from public life. The deſpotic views of a monarch, who was under the influence of a popiſh queen, a bigoted prelate, and a corrupt ſtateſman, led him to the practice of deceit and falſehood*; and the parties, who united in oppoſing his encroachments on the civil and religious rights of the people, ſoon deviated from their original principles; and availing them-

* See Appendix, Sect. V.

ſelves

ſelves of the gloomy enthuſiaſm of the times, concealed their perfidy and ambition, under the maſk of pious zeal, and divine illuminations. That Cromwell was guilty of hypocriſy, may with too much probability be inferred from numerous and undoubted facts. But I know not whether the two, which you have related, would have authorized a ſtranger to charge him publicly, with this reproachful offence. Cromwell poſſeſſed a vigorous, active, and enlarged underſtanding; and could aſſume, whenever he pleaſed, that dignity of manners, which befitted his high ſtation. But when he relaxed himſelf from the toils of war, or the cares of government, his amuſements frequently conſiſted in the loweſt buffoonery. Yet in theſe apparently unguarded moments, he was upon the watch to remark the characters, deſigns, and weakneſſes of men; and to penetrate into the inmoſt receſſes of their hearts. Before the trial of Charles, a meeting was held between the chiefs of the republican party and the general officers, to concert the model of the

intended new government. After the debates on this moſt intereſting and important ſubject, Ludlow informs us, that Cromwell, by way of frolic, threw a cuſhion at his head; and when Ludlow took up another cuſhion to return the joke, the general ran down ſtairs, and was in danger of breaking his bones in the hurry*. It is evident, therefore, that this extraordinary man might really be ſerious, under the appearance of levity. But this topic has engroſſed too much of our attention: And I will only add, that the more we cultivate moral or religious ſincerity in ourſelves, the leſs diſpoſed we ſhall be to ſuſpect the want of it in others.

There is a character, ſaid Sophron, of genuine dignity and importance, not uſurped like that of Cromwell, the luſtre of which has been tarniſhed by the charge of religious diſſimulation. This charge, you know, is laid in the ſtrongeſt terms againſt the apoſtle

* Hume's Hiſt.

Peter,

Peter, by St. Paul himſelf, who writes thus to the Galatians: *But when Peter came to Antioch, I withſtood him to the face becauſe he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew, and ſeparated himſelf, fearing them which were of the circumciſion. And the other Jews diſſembled likewiſe with him; inſomuch that Barnabas was carried away with their diſſimulation. But when I ſaw that they walked not uprightly, according to the Goſpel, I ſaid unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*

The conduct of Peter, on this occaſion, is the more extraordinary, as he appears to have had the fulleſt conviction of the abolition of the Jewiſh ceremonies, by the promulgation of the Goſpel of Chriſt*: A conviction, founded on an immediate reve-

* Acts, chap. v. ver. 7, 8.

lation from heaven; in conſequence of which he baptized the centurion Cornelius and his family. *And he ſaid unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company with, or come unto one of another nation: but God hath ſhewed me, that I ſhould not call any man common or unclean: For of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons: But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him**.

The enemies of Chriſtianity, anſwered Philocles, have indecently and unjuſtly triumphed in this diſpute between the apoſtles: And its friends, with a zeal no leſs heated and erroneous, have anxiouſly ſought to diſavow, or to evade it. Two primitive fathers† of the church, have even repreſented it as a ſtratagem or deceit, concerted privately, for the benefit of the Jewiſh converts: But Auſtin rejects this defence with proper indignation, as diſhonourable to the

* Acts, chap. x.

† Chryſoſtom and Jerom.

character

character of Paul, and inadequate to the juſtification of Peter, whoſe conduct he confeſſes to have been worthy of reprehenſion. The truth, indeed, ſeems to be, that this great apoſtle ſuffered himſelf to be governed, on the unfortunate occaſion now alluded to, as on ſeveral others of his life, by the warmth and impetuoſity of his paſſions. But diſſimulation is not the concomitant of ſuch a temper of mind: And as the hiſtory of Peter ſufficiently evinces, that this vice was foreign to his nature, it could originate only, in the preſent inſtance, from the ſudden impreſſion of fear on one, not yet completely diſciplined in the ſchool of fortitude. Let us learn, therefore, Sophron, from the ſeverity of St. Paul's rebuke, to avoid all mean prevarications, or time-ſerving compliances, inconſiſtent with our religious principles; and *to walk uprightly, according to the truth of the Goſpel; holding faſt the liberty, with which Chriſt has made us free.*

May we remember alſo, in the judgments which we form, concerning the faith and practices

practices of others, that our great Maſter and Lawgiver has inveſted them with the ſame freedom, which we ourſelves enjoy; and that if an apoſtle was not authorized to impoſe a yoke on others, we can have no claim to preſide over conſcience, however erroneous it may be, or to aſſume any power in ſpiritual matters, but what ariſes from the perſuaſive influence of ſuperior reaſon: And even in the exerciſe of this faculty, our language and treatment ſhould be ſuch, as to manifeſt the benignity and gentleneſs of Chriſtian toleration.

I could not hear the term *toleration* from the mouth of Philocles, without expreſſing ſome objections to it, although it has been adopted by Mr. Locke, and other writers of the firſt diſtinction. For words, I obſerved, have a conſiderable influence on opinions; and the preſent term appears to be injurious to that religious liberty, which it is deſigned to import. It implies a *right* to impoſe articles of faith, and modes of worſhip; that non-conformity is a crime; and

and that the *ſufferance* of it is a matter of favour or lenity. But the non-conformiſt in every country, whether he be a Chriſtian at Conſtantinople, a Proteſtant at Rome, an Epiſcopalian in Scotland, or a Preſbyterian in England, if his rational principles be conſonant to his practice, will regard this claim of *right* as uſurpation, and will urge, that it has neither been conferred by Jeſus Chriſt, nor delegated by the people. Our Saviour expreſsly declares, *My kingdom is not of this world:* And his religion was perſecuted and oppreſſed, during the period of its greateſt purity and perfection, and when the miniſters of it had gifts and powers which are now unknown. The people could not delegate ſuch a right to any man, or body of men: For the human mind is ſo mutable, that no individual can fix a ſtandard of his own faith, much leſs can he commiſſion another to eſtabliſh one for him and his poſterity. And this power would in no hands be ſo dangerous, as in thoſe of the ſtateſman or prieſt, who has the folly and preſumption to think himſelf qualified to exerciſe it.

Philocles,

Philocles, by his ſilence, ſeemed to acquieſce in what I had advanced: And when I apologized, afterwards, for the interruption, which I had more than once occaſioned, to the methodical diſcuſſion of the ſubject in debate, he very politely replied, that the freedom of converſation admits not of a rigid adherence to the preciſe rules of ſyſtem. But were it otherwiſe, ſaid he, the mind is relieved from wearineſs, and animated to more attention, by ſeaſonable digreſſions, if not too long, or too often repeated. That I am not averſe to enter into them myſelf, you may already have obſerved, and will now find, by my recalling to Sophron's memory the diſpute between the apoſtles Paul and Peter; and deducing from it an argument in favour of the truth of Chriſtianity. It is obvious, I think, from this incident, that there was no combination to deceive mankind amongſt the firſt preachers of the Goſpel; and that if, on ordinary occaſions, they were actuated by the common weakneſſes and prejudices of human nature, they neither attempted

tempted to conceal, nor to extenuate them. With the ſimplicity of truth, they related facts, as they occurred, whether advantageous or otherwiſe to their characters. And every unprejudiced judge will diſcover, in the records of the Goſpel, ſuch internal marks of fidelity, as no other hiſtory, either of ancient or modern periods, can diſplay. Juſtly, therefore, may we apply to the writings of the Evangeliſts, that maxim of Cicero, *Quis neſcit primam eſſe hiſtoriæ legem, ne quid falſi dicere audeat; deinde, ne quid veri, non audeat* ?*

——A pauſe enſued; and the converſation ſeemed to be concluded. But Sophron taking up Locke's Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, which happened to lie on the table before him, read the diſtinction which that author makes, between moral and metaphyſical truth. This ſuggeſted freſh matter of diſcuſſion, and gave riſe to a variety of obſervations, on the danger of

* Cicero de Oratore, lib. II.

error

error, and on the conduct of reaſon in our intellectual purſuits. Philocles particularly enlarged on the pernicious conſequences of ſupporting FALSE OPINIONS, for the ſake of argument, in public or private diſputations; and repreſented this practice as one great ſource of ſcepticiſm and infidelity, amongſt literary men*. The imagination, ſaid he, is ſtruck with novelty; it appears honourable to ſhake off the fetters of vulgar prejudice; and pride is doubly gratified, by the humiliation of an opponent, and the triumph over authority. Thus the paſſions become engaged, on the ſide which the ſceptic eſpouſes; ſophiſtry is miſtaken for ſound logic; he becomes enamoured of diſcoveries, made by his ſuperior penetration; and the ſingularity of his notions, or principles, which would create doubt and heſitation in a wiſe man, tends only to ſtrengthen his conviction of their certainty. Milton, deſcribing the character of Belial, one of the fallen angels, ſays in emphatic language,

* See Appendix, Sect. VI.

---"His

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - "His tongue
"Dropt manna, and could make the worſe appear
"The better reaſon, to perplex and daſh
"Matureſt counſels*."

Does not the philoſopher's maxim, ſaid Sophron, *Nullius jurare in verba magiſtri*, ſeem to recommend a ſtrict ſcrutiny into every ſubject? And what more judicious method can be deviſed, of correcting our prejudices, in favour of an eſtabliſhed opinion, than by ſetting ourſelves, boldly, in oppoſition to it?

Would you free yourſelf, Sophron, from a trifling malady, by incurring a ſevere and dangerous one? Then, urged Philocles, you may correct a ſlight prejudice by adopting another, that is greater. In our inquiries into truth, we ought to diveſt ourſelves, as much as poſſible, of every prepoſſeſſion. But it is ſurely a reaſonable deference, to the judgment of the public, concerning any doctrine or opinion, that we ſhould firſt examine, with attention, the

* Paradiſe Loſt, book II. l. 112.

arguments

arguments in its favour, before we admit the objections which may be raiſed againſt it. And by this method the mind will be leaſt unfairly biaſſed in her deciſions; and will reſt on them, with a degree of confidence and ſatisfaction, which can never reſult from partial or prejudiced inveſtigation. Young men of lively parts and acute underſtandings, when they enter upon the field of controverſy, are ſometimes ſo proud of their polemic ſkill, as to engage, indiſcriminately, on any ſide of the queſtion in debate. This is a dangerous practice, and cenſured even by Socrates himſelf; whoſe labours were devoted to the diſcuſſion of truth, and the detection of error. "If "thou continueſt to take delight in idle "argumentation," ſaid he to Euclides, "thou mayeſt be qualified to combat with "the ſophiſts, but wilt never know how "to live with men." And lord Bacon, the great luminary of ſcience, appears to have entertained ſimilar ideas: For, ſpeaking of the logic of Ariſtotle, he terms it, "a philoſophy for contention only; but

"barren

" barren in the production of works, for " the benefit of life*." Many lamentable proofs have I ſeen, of the tendency of this habit of altercation to create indifference, not only to intellectual, but alſo to moral and religious truth. Cato, the cenſor, propheſied the ruin of the Roman conſtitution, whenever this ſort of learning ſhould become the faſhionable ſtudy of his countrymen. He conceived his diſlike to it on the following occaſion. " In the year of Rome " 599, the Athenians ſent three of their " principal philoſophers, on an embaſſy to " the republic. At the head of theſe was " Carneades, a very celebrated leader of the " academic ſect. While he was waiting " for an anſwer from the ſenate, he employed " himſelf in diſplaying his talents in the art " of diſputation: And the Roman youth " flocked round him, in great numbers. " In one of theſe public diſcourſes he at- " tempted to prove, that *juſtice, and injuſtice,* " *depend altogether on the inſtitutions of civil*

* Biog. Brit. vol. I. ſecond edit. p. 449.

"*ſociety, and have no foundation in nature.*
" The next day, agreeably to the manner of
" that ſect, and in order to ſet the arguments
" on each ſide of the queſtion in full view,
" he ſupported with equal eloquence, the
" reverſe of his former propoſition. Cato
" was preſent at both theſe diſputations;
" and being apprehenſive that the moral
" principles of the Roman youth might be
" ſhaken, if they ſhould become converts to
" this mode of philoſophizing, he was anxi-
" ous to prevent its reception; and did not
" reſt, till he had prevailed with the ſenate
" to diſmiſs the ambaſſadors, with their
" final anſwer*."

Perhaps the verſatile opinions and principles of the Jeſuits may be aſcribed to this cauſe; for I have been informed by ſeveral of them, with whom I have converſed, that their academical exerciſes are chiefly directed to make them ſubtle diſputants. How far the ſame obſervation may be applicable to

* *Plut. in Vit. Caton.* Melmoth's Cato, p. 190.

the

the members of a learned profeſſion, highly reſpected in this country, I will not preſume to determine. But there is too much reaſon to apprehend, that the cuſtom of pleading for any client, without diſcrimination of right or wrong, muſt leſſen the regard due to thoſe important diſtinctions, and deaden the moral ſenſibility of the heart *.

I have been too ſtrongly impreſſed with the love of truth, replied Sophron, to debate with indifference about it; and therefore to guard againſt deception, from "what the nurſe, and what the prieſt have taught," I would examine my moſt ſerious opinions, and try whether I cannot, by direct oppoſition, or by the teſt of ridicule, invalidate their authority.

I have already given you my reaſons againſt this practice, anſwered Philocles; and I could enforce them by many examples of the pernicious conſequences of it, which

* See Appendix, Sect. VII.

have fallen under my obſervation. But private hiſtory is invidious; and I ſhall therefore confine myſelf to a few caſes of public notoriety. The academy of Dijon, many years ago, propoſed the following whimſical prize queſtion, viz. "Whether "the ſciences may not be deemed more "hurtful, than beneficial to ſociety?" M. Rouſſeau became a candidate for the laurel, and aſſumed the affirmative ſide of the queſtion; probably becauſe it furniſhed him with a better opportunity of diſplaying his genius, and powers of perſuaſion *. His diſcourſe was received with the higheſt applauſe; he became the dupe of his own rhetoric; and adopted as a philoſopher, the maxims which he had delivered as an orator. From this period commenced his fame, his paradoxes, and his misfortunes †. He combated the common ſenſe of mankind, with all the zeal of a reformer; and his writings proved like the bubble which glitters, ex-

* *Major eſt ille qui judicium abſtulit, quam qui meruit.* Cic. *Neſcio quomodo, dum lego aſſentior, cum poſui librum, aſſenſio omnis illa elabitur.* Idem. † Helvetius.

pands

pands, and burſts in the ſun-ſhine: They were dazzling, empty, and ſoon forgotten. I am inclined to ſuſpect that Machiavel's Prince, the Fable of the Bees, and other productions of this nature, originated from cauſes ſomewhat ſimilar to thoſe which gave riſe to the chimeras of Rouſſeau. And it is ſaid that a celebrated adverſary of Chriſtianity, by yielding up his judgment and imagination to a particular ſet of arguments, became ſucceſſively a proteſtant, a papiſt, and an infidel*.

But permit me, Sophron, to ſuggeſt to you a caution of ſtill higher importance, which regards ſuch of your intellectual purſuits as relate to the Deity. Religion may be conſidered both as a ſpeculative ſcience, and as a practical principle. In the former view, it conſtitutes the ſublimeſt object of the underſtanding, and the moſt intereſting topic of rational inveſtigation. In the latter, it is a ſpring of motion, and excites all the

* See an account of Mr. Tindal, in the Britiſh Biography, vol. IX. p. 314.

devout affections of veneration, gratitude, and love. When you contemplate, as a philoſopher, the character of the Divine Being, you muſt be ſtruck with reverence at the proofs, which offer themſelves, of his boundleſs power, univerſal preſence, and infinite duration: And theſe attributes, reflecting dignity and luſtre on the more amiable perfections of his nature, will heighten the impreſſion made by the relation, which he ſtands in to you, as your Creator, Benefactor, and Friend. Thus the principle of piety will ſubſiſt in your mind, in its full force; ſupported by the authority of reaſon, and harmonizing with all the feelings of your heart. But if you deſcend, from theſe general and exalted views of the Divine Being, into minute diſquiſitions concerning his eſſence, the freedom of his agency, and other ſubtilties beyond the human ken, you will ſoon damp the ardour of devotion in your breaſt: And ſhould you make theſe inquiries the common matter of academical diſputation, or of familiar debate, the ſacred

flame

flame will be extinguiſhed altogether*. The poet, lately quoted, has deſcribed ſome of the fallen angels, who had been driven from heaven for impiety and rebellion, as "ſitting on a hill retired, and reaſoning high"

"Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
"Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge abſolute;
"And found no end, in wand'ring mazes loſt*."

I mean not, however, to condemn, indiſcriminately, all metaphyſical reſearches of this kind. It is natural for men of a ſpeculative turn, to extend their views of theology beyond the clear limits either of reaſon, or of revelation: And if their inquiries be conducted with that humility and reverence, which ſuch ſubjects ſhould inſpire, they may tend to invigorate the underſtanding, without depraving the heart. The example of Locke, Newton, Clarke, Hartley, and other diſtinguiſhed philoſo-

* See Dr. Gregory's Comparative View; and Mrs. Barbauld on Devotional Taſte.

* Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, B. II. l. 559.

phers, affords ſufficient confirmation of this truth; and at the ſame time evinces a ſtill more pleaſing and important one, that Religion numbers, amongſt her votaries, men who have dignified and adorned human nature, by their genius, virtue, and learning. I would particularly recommend to your notice, Sophron, I need not ſay to your imitation, the conduct of Mr. Boyle; who had ſo profound a veneration for the Deity, that the name of God was never mentioned by him, without a pauſe in his diſcourſe*. This great philoſopher, alſo, had ſuch delicate notions of veracity, and was ſo ſenſible of the imperfection of human knowledge, even when derived from experiment, that in the Preface to his Eſſays, he makes an apology for the frequent uſe of the words *perhaps*, *it ſeems*, *'tis not improbable*, as implying a diffidence of the juſtneſs of his opinions: And this diffidence aroſe, as he informs us, from repeated obſervation, that what pleaſed him for a while,

* Britiſh Biography, vol. VI. p. 248.

was

was afterwards diſgraced by ſome further, or more recent diſcovery.

Here Philocles was interrupted by the arrival of a ſtranger; whoſe preſence put an end to the converſation.

ON THE

INFLUENCE

OF

HABIT AND ASSOCIATION.

---------- VIRESQUE ACQUIRIT EUNDO.

VIRGIL.

---------- ANGIT,

IRRITAT, MULCET, FALSIS TERRORIBUS IMPLET.

HOR. Ep. I. Lib. II.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF HABIT AND ASSOCIATION.

SECTION I.

THE laws of HABIT and ASSOCIATION form a moſt important branch both of phyſiology, and of ethics. And, as *the proper ſtudy of mankind is man*, every fact muſt be deemed intereſting, which tends to elucidate either the animal, intellectual, or moral œconomy of his nature. The following obſervations have a reference to one or other of theſe objects. But no particular regard has been paid to ſyſtem in the arrangement of them: And I have

I have attempted only, as lord Verulam expreſſes it, "to write certain brief notes, "ſet down rather ſignificantly, than cu-"riouſly."

I. MUSCULAR ACTIONS, perfectly ſpontaneous, may be excited without apparent volition, ſo as to become completely automatical, by the recurrence of thoſe impreſſions, with which they have been long aſſociated. I ſhall give a ſtriking example of the truth of this propoſition.

Several years ago, the counteſs of —— fell into an apoplexy, about ſeven o'clock in the morning. Amongſt other ſtimulating applications, I directed a feather, dipped in hartſhorn, to be frequently introduced into her noſtrils. Her ladyſhip, when in health, was much addicted to the taking of ſnuff; and the preſent irritation of the olfactory nerves produced a junction of the fore-finger and thumb, of the right hand; the elevation of them to the noſe; and the action of ſnuffing in the noſtrils.

When

When the ſnuffing ceaſed, the hand and arm dropped down in a torpid ſtate. A freſh application of the ſtimulus renewed theſe ſucceſſive efforts; and I was a witneſs to their repetition, till the hartſhorn loſt its power of irritation, probably by deſtroying the ſenſibility of the olfactory nerves. The counteſs recovered from the fit, about ſix o'clock in the evening; but, though it was neither long nor ſevere, her memory never afterwards furniſhed the leaſt trace of *conſciouſneſs* during its continuance.

Does not this inſtance of a complex ſeries of actions, ordinarily ſpontaneous, in circumſtances which ſeem to preclude both volition and conſciouſneſs, reflect ſome light on the obſcure queſtion, concerning the ſleep of the ſoul, ſo much agitated in the time of Mr. Locke? Is not the opinion of this celebrated philoſopher confirmed by it, that the perception or contemplation of ideas is to the mind, what motion is to the body, not its eſſence, but one of its operations: And that an unceaſ-

ing

ing energy of the underſtanding and the will, is the ſole prerogative of that infinitely perfect Being, who, according to the language of the Pſalmiſt, *never ſlumbers or ſleeps*.

II. Slight PARALYTIC AFFECTIONS of the organs of ſpeech, ſometimes occur, without any correſpondent diſorder in other parts of the body. In ſuch caſes, the tongue appears to the patient too large for his mouth, the ſaliva flows more copiouſly than uſual, and the vibratory power of the *glottis* is ſomewhat impaired. Hence the effort to ſpeak ſucceeds the volition of the mind, ſlowly and imperfectly; and the words are uttered with faultering and heſitation. Theſe are facts of common notoriety: But I have never ſeen it remarked, that in this local palſy, the pronunciation of PROPER NAMES is attended with peculiar difficulty; and that the recollection of them becomes either very obſcure, or entirely obliterated; whilſt that of perſons, places, things, and even of abſtract ideas, remains unchanged.

Such

Such a partial defect of memory, of which experience has furniſhed me with ſeveral examples, confirms the theory of aſſociation, and at the ſame time admits of an eaſy ſolution by it. For, as words are arbitrary marks, and owe their connection with what they import to eſtabliſhed uſage, the ſtrength of this connection will be exactly proportioned to the frequency of their recurrence; and this recurrence muſt be much more frequent with generic, than with ſpecific terms. Now, proper names are of the latter claſs; and the idea of a perſon or place may remain vivid in the mind, without the leaſt ſignature of the appellative, which diſtinguiſhes each of them. It is certain, alſo, that we often think in words; and there is, probably, at ſuch times, ſome ſlight impulſe on the organs of ſpeech, analogous to what is perceived, when a muſical note or tune is called to mind. But a leſion of the power of utterance may break a link in the chain of aſſociation, and thus add to the partial defect of memory, now under conſideration.

The following very curious fact I have received from unqueſtionable authority. Mr. S. ——, a Welchman by birth, and miniſter of a congregation at W——, had a paralytic ſtroke in 1783, at the age of ſixty, which deprived him entirely of the power of ſpeaking Engliſh, after he had preached in that language thirty or forty years. He could ſtill converſe in the Welch tongue, with facility; and continued to underſtand thoſe who ſpoke to him in Engliſh, though he was unable to make any reply in the ſame language.

III. Dr. Willis relates the ſtory of an IDEOT, who, reſiding within the ſound of a clock, regularly amuſed himſelf with counting aloud the hour of the day, whenever the hammer of that inſtrument ſtruck: But being afterwards removed to a ſituation, where there was no clock, he retained the former impreſſions ſo ſtrongly, that he continued to diſtinguiſh the ordinary diviſion of time, repeating at the end of every hour, the preciſe number of ſtrokes, which

which the clock would have ſtruck at that period*. Mr. Addiſon has quoted this fact, in one of the Spectators, not from the original, but from Dr. Plott's Hiſtory of Staffordſhire; and has deduced from it many important moral reflections. Whatever may be thought of the authenticity of this narrative, an inſtance has lately occurred, within the circle of my own obſervation, ſomewhat ſimilar, and which no leſs clearly evinces the power of habit to renew former mechanical impreſſions, independently of any external cauſe.

Mr. W—— had been long confined to his chamber, by a palſy, and other ailments. Every evening, about ſix o'clock, he played at cards with ſome of the family. He was ſeized, in June 1780, at three o'clock in the afternoon, with a fit, which terminated in deſipiency. At the ſtated hour of card playing, he fancied himſelf to be engaged in his uſual game; talked of the cards, as

* Willis *De Anima Brutor.* pars I. cap. xvi. pag. 85.

if they were in his hand; and was very angry at his daughter, when ſhe endeavoured to rectify his miſtaken imagination. His fatuity was of ſhort continuance; but when recovered from it, he expreſſed no recollection of what had paſſed.

IV. A celebrated French writer has remarked, that "the greater degree of ſagacity "any one is maſter of, the more ORIGINALS "will he diſcover in the characters of man-"kind*." This *originality* may doubtleſs depend on the primary conſtitution of the mind; but I am perſuaded alſo, that it is often the reſult of particular aſſociations. When theſe are unnatural or inordinate, they produce partial alienations of the underſtanding: And to this ſource we may trace the viſions of enthuſiaſm, the perſecuting zeal of bigotry, the ſanguinary honour of duelling, the ſordid purſuits of avarice, and the toilſome ſolicitudes of ill-directed ambition. Theſe and numberleſs

* Paſchal.

other

other quixotiſms of the mind give the phantoms of imagination an aſcendancy over reaſon, and produce a temporary inſanity, varying according to its object, degree, and duration. If the predominant train of ideas be foreign to the offices of life, there will be little chance of breaking the magic combination; and the habitual indulgence of this tyranny of paſſion, or fancy, will, at laſt, render it fixed and uncontrollable.

According to Shakeſpeare, "the lunatic, "the lover, and the poet are of imagination "all compact." But as our great dramatiſt obſerves, on another occaſion, "'t were to conſider too curiouſly to conſider ſo*." At leaſt, we ſhould reſtrict our concluſions, that they may not involve ſo large a portion of mankind, as to injure the honour even of human nature itſelf. Beſides, paſſion is the ſpring of the mind, which gives vigour and energy to all its movements: And, if not extravagantly diſproportionate to the

* Hamlet.

value of its object, it may be indulged, not only with innocence, but ſometimes even with ſingular advantage. For, the ardour inſpired by it is the ſource of all that is excellent in genius, and ſublime in conduct: And without the ſalutary aid of this ſpecies of enthuſiaſm, we ſhould ſink into a ſtate of torpid apathy.

But though it be difficult to define the preciſe boundaries of rationality, it can neither be denied, nor concealed, that partial inſanity may ſubſiſt with general intelligence. A few years ſince, a gentleman came from Buxton to Mancheſter to conſult me. He had been ſent by his phyſician, to uſe the bath, and to drink the waters of that place: But ſome gouty ſymptoms ſupervening, he was unwilling to proceed in the courſe enjoined him, without further advice. I received from him a well-connected, minute, and rational account of his complaint; and after giving ſuch directions as the caſe ſeemed to require, I aroſe to take my leave of him. He deſired me to ſit down again,

and

and told me he had lately read the MORAL TALES, which I had publiſhed; and from a little experiment related in one of them, hoped that I had made the nature of ſound a particular object of my ſtudy. I have a friend, continued he, who is conſtantly tortured, whenever he travels, with the moſt diſtracting noiſe in his ears; a noiſe produced by an inſtrument in the poſſeſſion of his implacable enemy. On expreſſing my diſbelief of the poſſibility of ſuch a fact, he averred the truth of it with much emotion; informed me that he was himſelf the ſufferer; deſcribed, in the moſt lively manner, the acute pains which he felt in his ear; and charged the biſhop of ——, in conſequence of a family quarrel, with being the author of them. I was now fully aware of my patient's mental infirmity, and inſtead of attempting to reaſon with him about the deluſion of his imagination, I tried to ſooth him with the hope that the Biſhop of ——, whom I had the honour of perſonally knowing, might be prevailed with to diſcontinue the exerciſe of ſo ex-

traordinary a power of torture. But finding it impoſſible to give him comfort, by inſpiring expectations which he rejected as groundleſs and abſurd, I had the good fortune to ſuggeſt a mode of relief that perfectly coincided with his own ideas. The painful impreſſion, ſaid I, produced by the biſhop on your ear, muſt conſiderably depend upon the ſtate of that organ; and if you can diminiſh its ſenſibility, and deaden the vibrations of the tympanum, you may again be reſtored to ſome degree of eaſe and enjoyment. A little olive oil poured twice or thrice every day into your ears will, in all probability, completely anſwer theſe purpoſes: If it do not, a ſmall quantity of opium may be combined with it. He liſtened to me with eager attention; joy ſparkled in his eyes at the ſuggeſtion of a remedy, which excited his hope and confidence; and I left him under the moſt happy conviction, that he might now ſet his ideal enemy at defiance.

This

This caſe recalls to my memory the very ſingular and affecting one of Mr. Simon Browne; of which it may not be unſeaſonable to give a ſhort recital. He was a diſſenting clergyman of exemplary life, and eminent intellectual abilities; but having been ſeized with melancholy, he deſiſted from the duties of his function, and could not be perſuaded to join in any act, either of public or of private worſhip. The reaſon which, after much importunity, he aſſigned, for this change in his conduct, was, "that he had fallen under the diſ-"pleaſure of GOD, who had cauſed his "rational ſoul gradually to periſh, and left "him only an animal life, in common "with brutes: That it was therefore pro-"fane in him to pray, and improper to be "preſent at the prayers of others." In this opinion he remained inflexible, at the time when all the powers of his mind ſeemed to ſubſiſt in full vigour; when his judgment was clear, and his reaſoning ſtrong and concluſive. For at this period, he publiſhed a defence of the *Religion* of *Nature*, and

and of the *Chriſtian Revelation*, in anſwer to *Tindal's Chriſtianity as old as the Creation:* And the work is univerſally allowed to be the beſt, which that celebrated controverſy produced. But in a dedication of it to queen Caroline, which ſome of his friends found means to ſuppreſs, he diſplays the very extraordinary phrenſy, under which he laboured. Speaking of himſelf, he informs her majeſty, "that by the im-"mediate hand of an avenging GOD, his "very thinking ſubſtance has, for more "than ſeven years, been continually waſt-"ing away, till it is wholly periſhed out of "him, if it be not utterly come to no-"thing."

This remarkable, and humiliating example of vigour and imbecility, rectitude and perverſion of the ſame underſtanding, I have related on the authority of Dr. Hawkeſworth,* who has preſerved the entire copy of the dedication, from which

* See the Adventurer.

only

only a brief extract is here made. Our ignorance of the hiſtory of Mr. Browne renders it impoſſible to trace, to its ſource, this mental malady. But there is reaſon to preſume, that it originated from ſome ſtrong impreſſion, and ſubſequent invincible aſſociation, connected with, or perhaps producing a change in the organization of the brain. Perhaps, having acquired an early predilection for the writings of Plato, he might afterwards, in ſome ſeaſon of hypochondriacal dejection, fall into the gloomy myſticiſm of the later followers of that amiable philoſopher: For Plotinus, who flouriſhed in the third century after the Chriſtian æra, taught that the moſt perfect worſhip of the Deity conſiſts, not in acts of veneration and of gratitude, but in a certain ſelf-annihilation, or total extinction of the intellectual faculties*.

I am inclined to believe, that the celebrated M. Paſchal laboured under a ſpecies

* See Collier's Hiſt. Dict. Alſo Maclaurin's Account of Sir Iſaac Newton's Diſcoveries, p. 397.

of

of inſanity, towards the concluſion of his life, ſimilar to that of Mr. Simon Browne. And, having hazarded ſuch a ſurmiſe, it is incumbent on me to ſhew, on what it is founded. This very extraordinary man diſcovered the moſt aſtoniſhing marks of genius in his childhood; and his progreſs in ſcience was ſo rapid, that at the age of ſixteen, he wrote an excellent treatiſe of Conic Sections. He poſſeſſed ſuch a capacious and retentive memory, that he is ſaid "never to have forgotten any thing which he had learned." And it was his practice, to digeſt and arrange in his mind a whole ſeries of reflections, before he committed them to writing. This power was at once ſo accurate and extenſive, that he has been heard to deliver the entire plan of a work, of which he had taken no notes, in a continued narration, that occupied ſeveral hours. But it is related, by the editor of his *Thoughts on Religion and other Subjects**, "that it pleaſed GOD ſo to touch

* See the Preface to that work.

"his

" his heart, as to let him perfectly under-
" ſtand, that the Chriſtian religion obligeth
" us to live for GOD only, and to propoſe
" to ourſelves no other object." In conſequence of this perſuaſion, he renounced all the purſuits of knowledge, and practiſed the moſt ſevere and rigorous mortifications; living in the greateſt penury, and refuſing every indulgence, which was not abſolutely neceſſary for the ſupport of life. It appears from ſome of his pious meditations, that this reſolution of mind proceeded from the viſitation of ſickneſs. And the following ſolemn addreſſes to the Deity clearly indicate an imagination perverted by the moſt erroneous aſſociations.

" O LORD, thou gaveſt me health to be
" ſpent in ſerving thee, and I applied it to
" an uſe altogether profane. Now thou
" haſt ſent ſickneſs for my correction.—I
" know, O LORD, that at the inſtant of my
" death, I ſhall find myſelf entirely ſepara-
" ted from the world, ſtripped naked of all
" things, ſtanding alone before thee, to
" anſwer

" anſwer to thy juſtice concerning all the " motions of my thoughts, and ſpirits. " Grant that I may look on myſelf as dead " already, ſeparated from the world, ſtrip- " ped of all the objects of my paſſion, and " placed alone in thy preſence.—I praiſe " thee, O GOD, that thou haſt been pleaſed " to anticipate the dreadful day, by already " deſtroying all things to my taſte and " thoughts, under this weakneſs, which I " ſuffer from thy providence. I praiſe thee, " that thou haſt given me this divorce from " the pleaſures of the world." Was it conſonant with ſoundneſs of underſtanding, for a man to take a ſudden diſguſt at all the liberal ſtudies, and innocent enjoyments, which had before engaged and gratified his mind? And was it not as much the fiction of a diſtempered fancy, that GOD enjoined poverty, abſtinence, and ignorance, to one poſſeſſing rank, fortune, and the nobleſt endowments of the mind, as the belief of Simon Browne, that he was diveſted of that rationality, which at the ſame time he ſo eminently diſplayed? Whenever falſe ideas,

of

of a practical kind, are ſo firmly united, as to be conſtantly, and invariably miſtaken for truths, we very juſtly denominate this unnatural alliance INSANITY. And, if it give riſe to a train of ſubordinate wrong aſſociations, producing incongruity of behaviour, incapacity for the common duties of life, or unconſcious deviations from morality and religion, MADNESS has then its commencement.

In the foregoing examples, the force of habit and aſſociation is clearly manifeſt. And man, whilſt under the influence of their authority, however deſpotic or perverted, ſtill retains a capacity for action and enjoyment, though he ceaſes to be a rational or moral agent. But the ſuſpenſion of their operation ſtops at once all the movements of the mind, and ſeems to annihilate every energy of the underſtanding, the affections, and the will. On the 25th of October 1778, a ſea-faring perſon, about forty years of age, was recommended as a patient

patient to the LUNATIC ASYLUM in York*. During his abode in the hoſpital, he was never obſerved to expreſs any deſire for ſuſtenance, or to ſhew any preference of it to his medicines. The firſt ſix weeks after his admiſſion, he was fed in the manner of an infant. A ſervant undreſſed him at night, and dreſſed him in the morning; after which, he was conducted to his ſeat in the common parlour; where he remained all day, with his body bent, and his eyes fixed upon the ground. Every thing was indifferent to him; and he was regarded, by all about him, as endued with little more than vegetable life. In this ſtate of inſenſibility he remained five years and ſix months. But, the 14th of May 1782, on his entrance into the parlour, he ſaluted the convaleſcents with the words *Good-morrow to you all.* He then thanked the ſervants of the houſe, in the moſt affectionate man-

* This caſe was lately tranſmitted to me, by my friend Dr. Hunter of York, to be communicated to the Literary and Philoſophical Society of Mancheſter. I have given only an abridgement of it.

ner

ner, for their tenderneſs to him, of which he had begun to be ſenſible ſome weeks before, but till then, had not reſolution to expreſs his gratitude. A few days after this unexpected recovery, he was permitted to write a letter to his wife, in which he expreſſed himſelf with becoming propriety. At this time, he ſeemed to take peculiar pleaſure in the enjoyment of the open air, and in his walks converſed with freedom and ſerenity. On making inquiry concerning what he felt, during the ſuſpenſion of his intellectual and ſenſitive powers, he replied, that his mind had been *totally loſt*; but that, about two months before his full reſtoration to himſelf, he began to have thoughts and ſenſations, which, at firſt, ſerved only to excite in him fears and apprehenſions, eſpecially in the night-time. On the twenty-eighth of May 1782, he returned to his family; and has now the command of a ſhip employed in the Baltic trade.

SECTION II.

I. IT is highly inſtructive, as well as curious, to contemplate the progreſſive influence of particular aſſociations on the affections and the judgment, as they gradually acquire the force of habit by time, and vividneſs by frequent renewal. Dr. Swift, in a letter to lord Bolingbroke, dated 1729, expreſſes himſelf in the following terms. "I remember, when I was a little boy, I felt a "great fiſh at the end of my line, which "I drew up almoſt on the ground, but it "dropt in, and the diſappointment vexes "me to this very day, and, I believe, it "was the type of all my future diſappoint-"ments." This little incident, perhaps, gave the firſt wrong bias to a mind, prediſpoſed to ſuch impreſſions; and by operating with ſo much ſtrength and permanency, it might poſſibly lay the foundation of

of the Dean's ſubſequent peeviſhneſs, paſſion, miſanthropy, and final inſanity. The quickneſs of his ſenſibility furniſhed a ſting to the ſlighteſt diſappointment; and pride feſtered thoſe wounds, which ſelf-government would inſtantly have healed. As children couple hobgoblins with darkneſs, every contradiction of his humour, every obſtacle to his preferment, was, by him, aſſociated with ideas of malignity and evil. By degrees, he acquired a contempt of human nature, and a hatred of mankind, which, at laſt, terminated in the total abolition of his rational faculties.

This is no exaggerated picture, and we have the Dean's own authority for its accuracy. "The chief end," ſays he, in a letter to Mr. Pope, "I propoſe to my-
"ſelf in all my labours, is to vex the world,
"rather than divert it; and, if I could
"compaſs that deſign, without hurting my
"own perſon or fortune, I would be the
"moſt indefatigable writer you have ever
"ſeen. I have ever hated all nations, pro-

" ſeſſions, and communities; and all my " love is towards individuals. For inſtance, " I hate the tribe of lawyers, but I love " Counſellor ſuch a one, and Judge ſuch " a one: 'Tis ſo with phyſicians, (I will " not ſpeak of my own trade) ſoldiers, " Engliſh, Scotch, French, and the reſt. " But principally I hate and deteſt that " animal called man, although I heartily " love John, Peter, Thomas, and ſo forth. " This is the ſyſtem upon which I have " governed myſelf many years, (but do " not tell) and ſo I ſhall go on, till I have " done with them*."

This letter is not written in a ſtrain, which will ſuffer the moſt indulgent critic to aſcribe it to jocularity. And in the epitaph which the Dean compoſed for himſelf long afterwards, and which is inſcribed on his monument in the cathedral of St. Patrick's, he has left a ſolemn, and deciſive memorial of his miſanthropy.

* Pope's Works, vol. IX. lett. II.

HIC DEPOSITUM EST CORPUS
JONATHAN SWIFT, S. T. P.
UBI SÆVA INDIGNATIO
ULTERIUS COR LACERARE NEQUIT,
&c.

The ſtrongeſt tint, in the complexion of the human character, may be ſometimes formed by a circumſtance, or event apparently caſual; which, by forcibly impreſſing the mind, produces a laſting aſſociation, that gives an uniform direction to the efforts of the underſtanding, and the feelings of the heart.

Dr. Conyers Middleton, one of the moſt learned, various, and elegant writers of the preſent age, is ſaid to have been much more addicted, in the early part of his life, to muſic, than to ſcience. But he was rouſed from his favourite amuſement, and ſtimulated to the cloſeſt application to ſtudy, by a ſarcaſm of his rival and enemy, the celebrated Dr. Bentley, who ſtigmatized him with the name of fidler*.

* Gent. Mag. 1773, page 387.

And indignation made him eager to convince the Doctor and the world, that he could *write* as well as *fiddle*; a conviction, of which his opponent had, afterwards, the moſt painful experience*.

The author of the *Night Thoughts*, a poem which contains the tendereſt touches of nature and paſſion, and the ſublimeſt truths of morality and religion, intermixed with frivolous conceits, turgid obſcurities, and gloomy views of human life, wrote that work under the recent preſſure of ſorrow, for the loſs of his wife, and of a ſon and daughter-in-law, whom he loved with paternal tenderneſs. Theſe ſeveral events happened within the ſhort period of three months, as appears from the following apoſtrophe to death.

Inſatiate archer! could not *one* ſuffice?
Thy ſhaft flew *thrice*; and *thrice* my peace was ſlain;
And *thrice*, e'er *thrice* yon moon had fill'd her horns†.

* Brit. Biograph. vol. IX.

† Night Thoughts.

But,

But, though time alleviated this diſtreſs, his mind, probably, acquired from it a tincture of melancholy, which continued through life; and caſt a ſable hue even on his very amuſements. The like diſpoſition, alſo, diſcovered itſelf in his rural improvements. He had an alcove in his garden, ſo painted as to ſeem, at a diſtance, furniſhed with a bench or ſeat, which invited to repoſe; and when, upon a nearer approach, the deception was perceived, this motto at the ſame time preſented itſelf to the eye,

Inviſibilia non decipiunt.

The things unſeen do not deceive us*.

The following witty alluſion bears the marks of a ſimilar turn of thought. The Doctor paid a viſit to Archbiſhop Potter's ſon, then Rector of Chiddingſtone, near Tunbridge. This gentleman lived in a country, where the roads were deep and miry; and when Dr. Young, after ſome danger and difficulty, arrived at his houſe,

* Brit. Biograph. vol. IX.

he inquired, "Whoſe field is that which I have croſſed?" "It is mine," anſwered his friend. "True," ſaid the Poet, "*Potter's field, to bury ſtrangers in* *."

II. It is a very important office of education to guard the underſtanding againſt the union of ideas, which have no natural or proper connection. Yet this object is leſs attended to than any other; and we often find men diſtinguiſhed for genius, erudition, and even ſtrength of mind, warped by the falſe conceptions, and governed by the prejudices of puerility. Credulouſneſs is the concomitant of the firſt ſtages of life; and is indeed the principle on which all inſtruction muſt be founded: But it lays the mind open to impreſſions of error, as well as of truth: And, when ſuffered to combine itſelf with that paſſion for the marvellous, which all children diſcover, it foſters the rankeſt weeds of chimera and ſuperſtition; rooting firmly in the mind, *all that the nurſe, and all the prieſt have*

* Vid. Gent. Mag. July 1781, page 319.

taught.

taught. Hence, the awful ſolemnity of *darkneſs viſible*, and of what the Poet has denominated *a dim religious light:* together with the terrors of evil omens, of haunted places, and of ghaſtly ſpectres.

> Of calling ſhapes, and beckoning ſhadows dire,
> And airy tongues, that ſyllable men's names
> On ſands, and ſhores, and deſert wilderneſſes*.

Hiſtory preſents us with few characters ſuperior to thoſe of Henry the fourth, of France, and his prime miniſter the duke of Sully. But notwithſtanding the wiſdom, knowledge, and diſcernment of theſe great men, they appear, on ſeveral occaſions, to have been actuated, by their juvenile aſſociations, in favour of aſtrology. What can be more foreign to the events of human life; what leſs adapted to excite fear or hope in the mind of an intelligent man, than the aſpect of a diſtant ſtar, or the variegated lines of his hand? Yet Sully confeſſes, that an early prepoſſeſſion had

* Milton's Comus.

made

made him weak enough to give credit to predictions, derived from this fanciful origin. And though he informs us that the king, his maſter, was of opinion, religion ought to inſpire a contempt of ſuch prophecies, the converſation which he relates, at the ſame time, evidently betrays Henry's confidence in them. This matter is put beyond diſpute by an incident, which occurred ſoon after the birth of the Dauphin; the particulars of which I ſhall recite from the memoirs of this excellent writer.

* "La Riviere was the king's firſt phy-
"ſician, a man who had little more reli-

* It ſhould ſeem that aſtrology was conſidered, formerly, as an eſſential part of the learning of a phyſician; for Chaucer, in the prologue to the Canterbury Tales, has thus characterized him.

With us there was a doctor of phyſik,
In al the worlde was ther non hym lyk,
To ſpeke of phyſik and of ſurgerye;
For he was groundit in aſtronomy.
He kept his pacient a ful gret del
In hourys by his magyk naturel;
Wel couth he fortunen the aſcendent
Of his ymagys for his pacient.

"gion

" gion than thoſe generally poſſeſs, who " blend it with judicial aſtrology. Henry " already felt a tenderneſs for his ſon, which " filled him with an eager anxiety to know " his fate: And having heard that La " Riviere ſucceeded wonderfully in his pre- " dictions, he commanded him to calcu- " late the Dauphin's nativity, with all the " ceremonials of art. To aid this buſineſs, " he had carefully ſought for the moſt ac- " curate watch, which could be procured; " that the preciſe moment of the prince's " birth might be exactly aſcertained. " About a fortnight afterwards, the king " and Sully being alone together, their " converſation turned upon the prediction " of the aſtrologer, La Broſſe, concerning " his majeſty. This renewed Henry's ſo- " licitude, with reſpect to his ſon; and he " ordered La Riviere to be called. 'Mon- " ſieur La Riviere, ſaid the king, 'what " have you diſcovered, relative to the " Dauphin's deſtiny.' 'I had begun my " calculations,' replied Riviere, 'but I left " them unfiniſhed, not caring to amuſe " myſelf

" myſelf any longer with a ſcience, which " I have always believed to be, in ſome " degree, criminal.' The king, diſſatis- " fied with this anſwer, commanded his " phyſician to ſpeak freely, and without " concealment, on pain of his diſpleaſure. " La Riviere ſuffered himſelf to be preſſed " ſtill longer; but at laſt, with an air of " apparent diſcontent, he delivered himſelf " in the following terms. ' Sire, your ſon " will complete the common period of hu- " man life, and will reign longer than you " ſhall do: But his turn of mind will be " widely different from yours; he will be " obſtinate in opinion, often governed by " his own whims, and ſometimes by thoſe " of others. Under his adminiſtration it " will be ſafer to think, than to ſpeak. " Impending ruin threatens your former " ſociety. He will perform great exploits, " be fortunate in his deſigns, and make a " diſtinguiſhed figure in Europe. There " will be a viciſſitude of peace and war in " his time. He will have children, and " after his death affairs will grow worſe

" and

" and worſe. This is all you can know " from me,' concluded La Riviere, ' and " more than I had reſolved to tell you.' " His majeſty, and the duke of Sully, re- " mained a long time together, making " reflections on the words of the aſtrologer, " which left a ſtrong impreſſion on the " mind of the king."

III. LUDICROUS ASSOCIATIONS, not founded in truth or nature, are peculiarly unfavourable to the principles and practice of virtue and religion. Reaſon, eſpecially during the period of youth, affords but a feeble barrier againſt the attacks of ridicule; and the mind that is enſlaved by its influence, may be ſo far deluded or depraved, as to loſe the ſuſceptibility of good impreſſions, or to contemplate the moſt amiable moral affections with deriſion, ſhame, and even diſguſt.

---------- Here ſubdued
By frontleſs laughter, and the hardy ſcorn
Of old, unfeeling vice, the abject ſoul
With bluſhes half reſigns the candid praiſe

Of

Of temperance, and honour; half diſowns
A free man's hatred of tyrannic pride;
And hears with ſickly ſmiles the venal mouth,
With fouleſt licence, mock the patriot's name *.

The celebrated Dr. Pitcairn was no leſs diſtinguiſhed for wit than learning. It is recorded, that, as he paſſed one day along the ſtreets, he beheld the affecting ſpectacle of a maſon, killed by the fall, and buried in the ruins of a chimney, which he had juſt completed. "Bleſſed are the dead, who die in the Lord," ſaid he, "for they "reſt from their labours, and their works "follow them." Such a humorous conjunction of reſembling yet incongruous ideas, probably ſtifled, in his breaſt, the ſentiments of compaſſion. And I have been informed by a very humane friend, that on the relation of a melancholy event, ſimilar in its circumſtances, the recollection of this ludicrous remark ſubſtituted, in his mind, emotions of laughter, for thoſe of commiſeration.

* Akenſide's Pleaſures of Imagination, book III.

The

The natural propenſity of Dean Swift led him to the indulgence of this ſpecies of drollery, very much to the prejudice of every finer feeling of the heart. In one of his letters, he laments the mortal illneſs of his amiable friend Arbuthnot; but mixes, with his expreſſions of ſorrow, certain whimſical reflections, which convert his mourning into grimace. "There is a paſ-"ſage in Bede," ſays he to Mr. Pope, "highly commending the piety and learn-"ing of the Iriſh in that age; where, after "abundance of praiſes, he overthrows "them all, by lamenting, that, alas! they "kept Eaſter at a wrong time of the year. "So our Doctor has every quality and "virtue, that can make a man amiable or "uſeful; but, *alas!* he hath *a ſort of ſlouch* "*in his walk.* I pray God protect him, "for he is an excellent Chriſtian, though "not a Catholic*."

When the mind has been long habituated to the aſſemblage of ludicrous ideas, they

* Pope's Works, vol. IX. lett. XI.

recur

recur on very improper occaſions, not only ſpontaneouſly, but even in deſpite of every effort of the judgment and the will. In this ſtate, elevation of thought, and dignity of character, are unattainable; and ſerioufneſs, when aſſumed, is always marked with ſome glaring and riſible inconſiſtency. Swift, in his laſt teſtament, bequeaths three old hats, and other ſtill more trifling and abſurd legacies, with farcical ſolemnity; and the celebrated Hogarth could not help diſplaying traits of humour, in his graveſt hiſtorical paintings. I have heard it remarked by one, who was ſometimes the companion of his walks, that he would interrupt the moſt intereſting converſation, to laugh at any oddity, which preſented itſelf; and that his eyes were conſtantly caſt about, in ſearch of objects ſingular and diverting. When a man of this turn, applies himſelf to books, it is not inſtruction or rational criticiſm, but hilarity, that is his purſuit: And he finds food for his prevailing appetite, equally palatable, both in the beauties and the blemiſhes of his author. For Tully has well obſerved,

obſerved, that the *verbum ardens*, the glowing boldneſs of expreſſion, which ſublimity of ſentiment inſpires, may be eaſily rendered ludicrous, by an illiberal paraphraſe. Even entire productions of ſome of the beſt writers, have been thus miſrepreſented and deformed, for the purpoſe of merriment, under the title of traveſties. And the bulk of mankind are readily deceived into the belief, that what gives riſe to laughter is in itſelf ridiculous. For this reaſon, a reader of ſenſibility, who has the intereſt of virtue and religion at heart, will peruſe, with pain and diſguſt, the *Meditations on a Broom-ſtick, written according to the ſtyle and manner of the Honourable Robert Boyle**. "To what "a height," ſays lord Orrery, "muſt the "ſpirit of ſarcaſm ariſe in an author, who "could prevail upon himſelf to ridicule ſuch "a man as Mr. Boyle! But the ſword of "wit, like the ſcythe of time, cuts down "friend and foe, and attacks every thing "that accidentally lies in its way." It muſt

* Swift's Works, vol V. p. 372.

be confeſſed, however, that this great and good philoſopher has indulged, in his theological writings, certain conceits, which will draw a ſmile from his warmeſt admirers. A zeal to promote the habit of pious and moral reflections has, ſometimes, tempted him to force ideas into the moſt unnatural alliance; and to deduce very important analogies, from objects or circumſtances, not only incongruous, but low and contemptible. Thus, from the ſtumbling of a horſe, in a good road, he infers the danger of proſperity; from being let blood in a fever, he juſtifies the wiſdom of the Deity, in depriving his creatures of ſpiritual ſuperfluities; and from a diſtaſte of the ſyrups, preſcribed by his phyſician, he concludes, that the good things of life are not objects of envy, becauſe not always reliſhed as enjoyments. But I feel a reluctance to point out ſuch trivial exuberances, in the works of Mr. Boyle. It is ungenerous to injure the well earned wreath of laurel, which he wears, by faſtidiouſly culling a few ſolitary leaves, that are withered. We ſhould remember

member alſo, that dignity and meanneſs, grace and vulgarity, have, in many inſtances, no fixed ſtandard; and are dependent on certain acceſſory aſſociations, which vary in different countries, at different periods of time, and with different perſons even of the ſame age and place. Jacob is repreſented in the holy Scriptures, as calling his ſons together, before his death, to deliver to each of them his benediction. And in the language of metaphor and prophecy, he ſays, *Iſſachar is a ſtrong aſs, couching down between two burdens:* From which it appears, that this animal was not then regarded as a ſymbol of ſtupidity and inſignificance. Ajax, retreating between two armies, is compared, by Homer, to the lion for undaunted courage, and to the aſs for ſullen and unyielding ſlowneſs*. But Mr. Pope, in his tranſlation, has omitted the latter alluſion, to accommodate his work to the ſtate of modern opinion. The ſame ſublime poet exhibits the awful uncertainty of

* Il. Lib. XI.

victory, in the engagement between the Greeks and Trojans, by the image of a poor woman, weighing wool in a pair of ſcales. And Euſtathius ſays, it was a tradition, that Homer derived this ſimile from the occupation of his mother, who maintained herſelf by ſuch manual labour*. But a ſtill more remarkable compariſon occurs, in the writings of this ancient bard. For Ulyſſes, toſſing about through the whole night, with reſtleſs anxiety, is likened to a fat pudding, frying on the fire †. Even Virgil, whoſe elegance and correctneſs are univerſally acknowledged, has drawn the ſimilitude of a queen (Amata the wife of king Latinus) under the violence of paſſion, from a company of boys whipping a top‡.

I do not recollect one coarſe alluſion, or low image in the whole poem of *Paradiſe Loſt*; though ſeveral, contained in it,

* See the Notes of Dacier, Pope, and other Commentators.

† Od. Lib. XXI. ‡ Æn. Lib. VII.

are

are fantaſtical, being derived from the fictions of heathen mythology. But it is more than probable that Milton, when tranſlated by foreigners, will not appear to deſerve the character of undeviating dignity. For the correſpondent terms, in other languages, may have ſecondary ideas of meanneſs affixed to them, from which, in the original they are exempt. The ſame remark is applicable to other works; and it is particularly to be wiſhed, that the books of the Old and New Teſtament, in the common verſion, were always peruſed with a candid attention to it.

I have been told of a picture, which exhibits a burleſque view of the tablature, repreſenting the judgment of Hercules. The young Hero is painted as a tall grenadier, Virtue as a methodiſt preacher, and Pleaſure as a drunken ſtrumpet. The parody, if this term can be applied to painting, may anſwer the purpoſe of exciting laughter, but will counteract, in the ſpectator's mind, all the beneficial effects

of the moſt inſtructive and philoſophical apologue of antiquity.

> Diſcit enim citius, meminitque libentius illud
> Quod quis deridet, quam quod probat et veneratur.
> HOR.

PARODY is a favourite flower both of ancient and of modern literature*. It is a ſpecies of ludicrous compoſition, which derives its wit from aſſociation; and never fails to produce admiration and delight, when it unites taſte in ſelection, with felicity of application. Even licentious ſpecimens of it move to laughter; for we are always inclined to be diverted with mimickry, or ridiculous imitation, whether the original be an object of reſpect, of indifference, or of contempt. A poliſhed Athenian audience heard, with burſts of mirthful applauſe, the diſcourſes of the venerable Socrates, burleſqued upon the ſtage; and no Engliſhman can read the Rehearſal without ſmiling at the medley of borrowed abſur-

* See Diog. Laertius, Lucian. Dialog. Boileau. Cervantes, Butler, Swift, &c. &c.

dities,

dities, which it exhibits. Mr. Pope's *Dunciad, and Rape of the Lock* abound with the moſt admirable parodies; but ſome of them may appear, to a religious mind, chargeable with levity and profaneneſs. I ſhall quote an example, both of the excellent and exceptionable; as the beauty of the one, and the fault of the other, equally relate to the ſubject of the preſent eſſay.

When the fatal rape was committed by the Baron, on Belinda's Lock, ſhe is repreſented as attempting to revenge herſelf by her bodkin.

Now meet thy fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her ſide.
The ſame, his ancient perſonage to deck,
Her great great grandſire wore about his neck,
In three ſeal rings; which after, melted down,
Formed a vaſt buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whiſtle next it grew,
The bells ſhe jingled, and the whiſtle blew;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
Which long ſhe wore, and now Belinda wears*.

* Canto V. line 87.

The unlearned reader will be ſtruck with this ſplendid, genealogical deſcription of an inſignificant bodkin: But he, who is verſed in the writings of Homer, will peruſe it with additional delight, from the recollection of the analogy, which it bears to the progreſs of Agamemnon's ſceptre. In the third Canto, of the incomparable poem above referred to, a game of Ombre is deſcribed with all the *pathos* and ſolemnity, which the heroic muſe can call forth: And the cards in Belinda's hand being pompouſly enumerated, viz.

> - - - - - - - Four kings, in majeſty rever'd,
> With hoary whiſkers, and a forky beard:
> And four fair queens, whoſe hands ſuſtain a flow'r,
> Th' expreſſive emblem of their ſofter power, &c.

the two following lines ſucceed;

> The ſkilful nymph reviews her force with care,
> *Let Spades be trumps! ſhe ſaid*; *and trumps they were.*

This parody of one of the moſt ſublime paſſages in the Old Teſtament, *and* God *ſaid, Let there be light, and there was light,* may,

may, I think, be juſtly deemed reprehenſible; as it tends to connect a ludicrous idea with that Being, who ought never to be thought of, but with reverence*. But ſhould this remark appear to be an overſtrained refinement, it will be acknowledged that, in leſs dignified caſes, very ſlight aſſociations, of the burleſque kind, have an aſtoniſhing effect on the ſentiments

* Pope ſeems to have been peculiarly fond of alluſions to this paſſage of the Old Teſtament; but has been a little unfortunate in the application of them. The truth is, that the ſentiment is too ſublime, either for burleſque, or for compliment. And the extravagance of theſe lines, in his epitaph on Sir Iſaac Newton, offends almoſt equally with the parody quoted above.

> Nature, and Nature's laws lay hid in night;
> God *ſaid, Let Newton be!* and all was light.

This hyperbolical encomium is ſuch a profanation of ſacred writ, to monumental flattery, that it was juſtly ſatirized in the following epigram, written by a young man, who has diſcloſed only the initials of his name.

> If Newton's exiſtence enlighten'd the whole,
> What part of expanſion inhabits the fool?
> If light had been total, as Pope hath averr'd,
> I. T. had been right, for he could not have err'd:
> But Pope has his faults, ſo excuſe a young ſpark;
> Bright Newton's deceas'd, and we're all in the dark.

and

and taſte of thoſe who form them. When Thomſon's tragedy of Sophoniſba was firſt repreſented on the ſtage, the higheſt expectations were formed of its theatrical merit. But a waggiſh parody on the following line,

O! Sophoniſba! Sophoniſba, O!

damned the reputation of the play; and for a while the town echoed with

O! Jemmy Thomſon! Jemmy Thomſon, O*!

It happened not long ſince, that a perſon of mean rank was elected provoſt, or chief magiſtrate, of Aberdeen. In the firſt moments of elevation, and whilſt receiving the congratulations of his friends, he laid his hands upon his breaſt, and very emphatically declared, that *after all he was but a mortal man.*

Is it poſſible for any one, under the impreſſion of this ludicrous ſtory, to read,

* Johnſon's Lives of the Poets; Article, Thomſon.

without

without ſmiling, the fact related by Ælian, and quoted with great applauſe by many other hiſtorians, viz. that Philip, king of Macedon, kept a perſon in his ſervice, whoſe office it was to deliver to him, daily, the following admonition; *Remember, Philip, that thou art mortal?* Perhaps, if ſuch an incident had occurred in Greece, during the reign of that monarch, it might have turned into ridicule the admiration, in which his inſtitution was held; by expoſing, at once, the abſurdity, pride, and affected humility, on which it was founded.

The people improperly, becauſe opprobriouſly, called Quakers, certainly merit a very high degree of eſteem from their fellow citizens, on account of their induſtry, temperance, peaceableneſs, and catholic ſpirit of charity. For notwithſtanding the enthuſiaſtic pretenſions of their founders, to ſuperior ſanctity and Divine inſpiration, they diſclaimed all dominion over faith and conſcience. And Barclay, their learned apologiſt, wrote ably in defence of religious liberty;

liberty; whilſt Penn, as a lawgiver and civil magiſtrate, eſtabliſhed it, on the broadeſt foundation, in his new government of Penſylvania*. At a period, when bigotry and perſecution were predominant through the Chriſtian world, ſuch rational ſentiments and liberal conduct reflect the higheſt honour on this ſect. But the ſingularity of their apparel, manners, and forms of worſhip, has expoſed them to the keeneſt ſhafts of ridicule. And however illiberally and unjuſtifiably ſuch offenſive weapons may

* This venerable man was ſuſpected of being a papiſt in diſguiſe, owing to the favour ſhewn him by king James II. To obviate ſo unjuſt an opinion, ſeveral letters were written by him to Dr. Tillotſon, then dean of Canterbury, who, amongſt others, had adopted it; and in one of them he thus expreſſes himſelf. "I know not a jeſuit or a prieſt in the world: And "yet I am a catholic, though not a Roman. I have bowels "for mankind, and dare not deny others, what I crave for "myſelf, I mean, liberty for the exerciſe of my religion; "thinking faith, piety, and providence, a better ſecurity than "force; and that, when truth cannot prevail with her own "weapons, all others will fail her.---I am no Roman Catho-"lic, but a Chriſtian, whoſe creed is the Scripture, of the "truth of which I hold a nobler evidence, than the beſt "church authority in the world."

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have

have been employed, they would, in all probability, have prevailed, if the converts and youth of this ſect had not been fortified againſt them, by the moſt unremitting ſtrictneſs of their inſtitutions. Theſe are admirably calculated to correct, or to prevent, all ludicrous aſſociations; and to ſuppreſs, if poſſible, the very principle of laughter, as inconſiſtent with the *ſerioufneſs, gravity, and godly fear of the goſpel**. It is aſtoniſhing to obſerve, in a large body of people, the efficacy of a ſet of practical maxims, utterly repugnant to nature: And the influence of them is early viſible, even in their children; who diſplay an invariable ſteadineſs of countenance and deportment, under circumſtances which cover others, of the ſame age, but differently educated, with the bluſhes of baſhful confuſion. But there is now an increaſing relaxation of diſcipline amongſt the members of this reſpectable community; and their diſtinguiſhing modes will gradually ceaſe, as they become more and more

* Barclay's Apology for the Quakers, p. 136.

combined

combined with the painful ideas of obloquy and deriſion, in the minds of thoſe who adopt them.

Piety to God, whether it reſpects the inward ſentiments and affections of the ſoul, or the outward expreſſions of them in homage and prayer, ought to elevate us far above the reach of raillery, or the influence of low and ludicrous aſſociations. But unhappily, both the principle and practice of devotion are too often debaſed by ſuperſtition, deformed by enthuſiaſm, and counterfeited by hypocriſy: And as theſe conſtitute legitimate objects of ridicule and contempt, the ſterling value of piety itſelf becomes depreciated by the union of a baſe and foreign alloy. Such numbers *draw near to the Deity with their lips, whilſt their hearts are far from him*, that a noble writer has ſarcaſtically obſerved, "If we are "told a man is religious, we ſtill aſk, "what are his morals? But if we hear at "firſt that he has honeſt morals, and is "a man of natural juſtice and good tem-

"per,

"per, we ſeldom think of the other queſ-
"tion, whether he be religious and de-
"vout*? Theſe are conſiderations, which operate powerfully on the mind: And if they be ſtrengthened by the ideas of ungraceful geſtures, diſſonant tones of voice, or other extravagancies in devotion, ſuch a degree of timidity and falſe delicacy may be created, as entirely to depreſs the fervour, which theſe exerciſes are adapted to excite. Prayer may then be performed as a duty, but will not be felt as a privilege; and the creature will even bluſh at the higheſt honour he can enjoy, that of holding communion with his Creator. Many an ingenuous youth has been deſpoiled of this glorious diſtinction of humanity, by the ſneers and jeſts of his companions: And of the military profeſſion it is ſaid, that an officer would rather face the mouth of a cannon, than be found privately in the poſture of ſupplication. Dr. Swift ſeems to have been governed, in his religious obſer-

* Lord Shaftſbury's Characteriſtics.

vances,

vances, by ſome ſuch ill-grounded aſſociation. His conſtant preſence at church, whilſt he reſided at the deanery of St. Patrick's, he knew would be expected; but he was ſedulouſly careful to conceal whatever had the appearance of voluntary devotion. When he was in London, therefore, he never attended divine ſervice, but at a very early hour in the morning. And though he practiſed family prayer in his houſe, his ſervants aſſembled, as it were, by ſtealth; ſo that Dr. Delany lived ſix months with him, before he diſcovered it*.

I hope it will not be underſtood, from what has been advanced on the topic of ludicrous aſſociations, that I am averſe to

* Brit. Biog. vol. VIII. Johnſon's Lives of the Poets, Article Swift.

Dr. Swift furniſhes an excellent ſubject for the moral anatomiſt. His life was eventful; his paſſions were various and ſtrong; and his ſenſibilities acute in the extreme. Self-indulgence gave every ſpring to action, within him, its full power; and pride prevented the concealment of its operation. Hence the motives, which directed his conduct, were ſeldom either extraneous or complex; and they are generally eaſy to be traced to their ſource.

laughter,

laughter, or an enemy to wit and pleaſantry. Human life, without their exhilarating influence, would be a ſcene of anxious care, or phlegmatic dulneſs. Nor is the harſher controul of ridicule to be wholly condemned or rejected. It is neceſſary to reſtrain the irregular ſallies of folly; and, as theſe often proceed from a lively imagination, the ſenſe of it is happily acuteſt, where its correction is moſt required.

IV. There are few people, who have not, at particular ſeaſons, experienced the effect of certain accidental aſſociations, which obtrude one impertinent idea, or ſet of ideas, on the mind, to the excluſion of every other. Mr. Locke has noticed this weakneſs, and he humorouſly deſcribes it, "as "a childiſhneſs of the underſtanding, where-"in, during the fit, it plays with and dan-"dles ſome inſignificant puppet, without "any end in view*." Thus, a tune, a proverb, a ſcrap of poetry, or ſome other trivial

* Locke's Conduct of the Underſtanding.

object, will ſteal into the thoughts, and continue to poſſeſs them long after it ceaſes to be amuſing. Perſuaſives to diſmiſs a gueſt that proves ſo troubleſome, can hardly be neceſſary; and bodily exertion is generally the beſt remedy for this mental infirmity. But there is another ſtate of mind, dependent on the laws of aſſociation, which is more dangerous, becauſe it invites to indulgence. It conſiſts in reveries, gay viſions of fancy, the creation of air-built caſtles, and cobweb *hypotheſes*. Men of genius alone are incident to theſe flattering deluſions; and they too often implicitly give way to them. But in proportion as they prevail, reaſon and judgment are impaired; ſtudy becomes formal dulneſs; activity toilſome; and the neceſſary offices of life are neglected. Thomſon has thus beautifully pictured ſuch a character.

There was a man of ſpecial grave remark;
A certain tender gloom o'erſpread his face,
Penſive, not ſad, in thought involv'd, not dark;
As ſweet this wight could ſing as morning lark,
And teach the nobleſt morals of the heart:
But theſe his talents were y' buried ſtark.

To

To noon-tide ſhades incontinent he ran,
Where purls the brook with ſleep inviting ſound,
There would he linger till the lateſt ray
Of light ſat trembling on the welkin's bound.
Oft as he travers'd the cœrulean field,
And mark'd the clouds, that drove before the wind,
Ten thouſand glorious ſyſtems would he build,
Ten thouſand great ideas fill'd his mind;
But with the clouds they fell, and left no trace behind *.

V. It has been remarked, that gameſters, ſailors, and others, who are under the influence of what is vulgarly, but very improperly, termed *chance*, that is, of cauſes not within the reach of human power to direct, nor of human ſagacity to diſcern, are extremely prone to ſuperſtition. Their hopes and fears, their confidence and deſpair, are founded on circumſtances, which bear only a fanciful relation to the events, that are to come. Imagination connects the ideas of magnitude and importance with the ſlighteſt cauſes, which are viewed in obſcurity; as objects appear largeſt to our ſenſes during twilight. A gameſter lays

* Thomſon's Caſtle of Indolence, Canto I.

great ſtreſs on the luck of a ſeat, or the ſhake of a die: And I remember, in croſſing a ferry, whilſt it was very calm, the boatman whiſtled more than three hours a particular ſet of notes, to forward the motion of his veſſel, crying out, at ſhort intervals, *Blow, good wind, blow; blow a briſk gale!* And if a gentle gale ſprung up, he redoubled his efforts, in the fulleſt aſſurance of ſucceſs. The abſolute truſt, repoſed in empirical medicines, ariſes from a ſimilar deception; and the miraculous operation, often aſcribed to them, even by perſons of judgment and education, is a proof of the aſtoniſhing power of wrong aſſociations. The wiſe emperor Marcus Aurelius was ſo firmly perſuaded of the efficacy of a certain antidote, called *theriaca*, to reſiſt every ſpecies of poiſon, that he made uſe of it daily, to the great injury of his health. For his head became affected to ſuch a degree, that he dozed in the midſt of buſineſs; and when opium was left out of the compoſition, an obſtinate watchfulneſs enſued*.

* Galen de Antidotis, lib. I. cap. 1.

The

The ſame principle of aſſociation explains the dogmatiſm of the critic, and the antiquarian; whoſe poſitiveneſs, reſpecting the conſtruction of a ſentence, or the letters of a worn-out inſcription, is often in exact proportion to their uncertainty. When any one ſoars, with great ardour, into the regions of conjecture, the airy phantoms, which he meets with, will be contemplated by him as ſubſtantial realities: And he will purſue truth, not with a temperate and rational zeal, but with the blind enthuſiaſm of love; dignifying, like a paſſionate *inamorato*, every conceit of his mind, and admiring diſcoveries which exiſt no where, but in his own brain. Theſe reflections have been, in part, ſuggeſted by the peruſal of the memoirs of Mr. Whiſton; a man, whoſe genius, learning, and integrity, might have placed him high in the ſcale of excellence, had he not ſuffered a perverted imagination to uſurp the juſt authority of judgment. "The warmth of his temper diſ-
"poſed him to receive any ſudden thoughts,
"any thing, that ſtruck his fancy, when

" favourable to his preconceived ſcheme " of things, or to any new ſchemes of " things, which ſerved, in his opinion, a " religious purpoſe*." With ſuch propenſities he wrote *An Eſſay on the Revelation of St. John:* And being appointed, the following year (1707), to preach Mr. Boyle's lectures, he choſe for his ſubject, the *accompliſhment of Scripture prophecies.* In 1712, when prince Eugene of Savoy was in England, he dedicated a work to him, in which *he interpreted the end of the hour, and day, and month, and year, for the Ottoman devaſtations, Apoc.* 9.15. *to have been put by his glorious victory over the Turks, September* 1, 1697. *O. S. or the ſucceeding peace of Carlowitz,* 1698†. His favourite conceptions were now ſo ſtrongly rivetted in his mind, that he diſcerned clearly all the revolutions of paſt and future ages, in the writings of the Prophets, or the reve-

* Mr. Collins.

† Prince Eugene ſeems to have been pleaſed with the honour of the diſcovery, that he was the object of ſo ancient a prediction; for he preſented Mr. Whiſton, on this occaſion, with a purſe of gold. See Brit. Biog. vol. VIII. p. 247.

lations

lations of St. John. Such indeed was the aſcendency of theſe abſurd aſſociations over his underſtanding, that he gave entire credit to the impudent impoſture of Mary Tofts, a woman of Godalmin, who pretended to be delivered of rabbits, becauſe her monſtrous births were deemed, by him, to be the exact completion of an old prediction in Eſdras*.

In almoſt every caſe of wrong aſſociations, the underſtanding either voluntarily ſuſpends its controuling and directing power, or is deluded into a conformity with fancy; and the mind ſtill retains a conſciouſneſs of freedom, and of moral agency. But there are certain habits, which uſurp, by *force*, the dominion of reaſon, and compel the will to gratify inordinate deſires, by the choice of known evil, in preference to acknowledged good. The lamentation of the poet *video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor*, ſeems alſo to have been felt by St.

* Gent. Mag. July. 1781. p. 321.

Paul, who ſays, Rom. vii. 11. *That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that, which I would not, I conſent unto the law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do, but ſin that dwelleth in me.* If an enlightened Apoſtle ſpeaks in ſuch abaſing terms of himſelf, with how much more truth and propriety might the ſame language have been adopted, by a late advocate for the divine diſpenſation of the Goſpel. For charity inclines me to hope, that the learned author of the Chriſtian Hero *wrote* in conſiſtency with, whilſt he *acted* in oppoſition to, his moſt ſerious conviction. This work, Sir Richard Steele informs us*, was compoſed by him, principally with a view to contraſt impreſſions of piety and virtue, with the ſtrong propenſity, which he experienced, to licentious pleaſures. For he ſays, even when rioting in ſcenes of debauchery, he was deeply conſcious of the impropriety of his con-

* See his Apology for himſelf and his writings.

duct,

duct, and condemned thoſe unlawful gratifications which he had not reſolution to renounce. His Chriſtian Hero, however, whilſt the treatiſe remained privately in his own hands, afforded but a weak and ineffectual check to his vicious purſuits. He, therefore, determined to publiſh it; that, by thus placing himſelf in a new light, before his acquaintance, he might be reſtrained from guilt, by an explicit and avowed teſtimony in favour of goodneſs. But it does not appear that this ſingular experiment proved ſucceſsful. Steele forſook not his debaucheries; and by having affected the ſaint, he aggravated, in the opinion of his friends, his condemnation as a ſinner. Yet, Mr. Pope, who knew him well, juſtified him from the imputation of hypocriſy; and always regarded him as a real lover of virtue, in *theory*, though a ſlave to vice, in *practice**.

Many other examples might be adduced of the force of evil habits, and the perni-

* Ruffhead's Life of Pope, p. 493. Brit. Biog. vol. VIII.

cious

cious influence of falſe aſſociations, whether intellectual or moral: But to dwell long on the ſhades of the human character, is apt to abate our benevolence to mankind; and to impair the principle of veneration, towards the great Author of our nature. More pleaſing would be the taſk, and I will add, more eaſy too, to vindicate the wiſdom of the Divine laws, by ſhewing, that the power of habit, and the propenſity to combine ideas together, are eſſential to the juſt conſtitution of the mind: And that, without their well regulated aid, knowledge would be unattainable, virtue a tranſient emotion or deſultory act, and life itſelf a ſcene of indifference and inſipidity.

ON

INCONSISTENCY OF EXPECTATION,

IN

LITERARY PURSUITS.

RETINUIT, QUOD EST DIFFICILLIMUM, EX SAPIENTIA MODUM.

TACIT. VIT. AGRICOL.

ON

INCONSISTENCY OF EXPECTATION,

IN

LITERARY PURSUITS.

He, who hath treaſures of his own,
May leave a cottage, or a throne;
May quit the world to dwell alone,
Within his ſpacious mind.

WHERE, amongſt the men of ſcience, is the Archetype to be found, of a picture ſo flattering to human pride? The original, from which it appears to have been drawn, was, indeed, an exalted character; but at the ſame time, alas! a feeble valetudinarian, who muſt have experienced thoſe mortifying impediments

to

to mental exertion, which ariſe from a conſtitution naturally delicate, and broken by laborious reſearches into truth. Under ſuch circumſtances, could it be affirmed, that

> Locke had a ſoul,
> Wide as the ſea,
> Calm as the night,
> Bright as the day;
> There might his vaſt ideas play,
> Nor feel a thought confin'd.

The amiable Poet*, who has thus pourtrayed, with the glowing colours of admiration and reſpect, one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed ornaments of the human ſpecies, paſſed himſelf a life of lingering ſickneſs: And, though his genius was fertile, and his induſtry wonderfully and variouſly productive, yet, ſuch was his ſenſibility of the obſtructions he had to ſurmount, that he made a painful and humiliating calculation of the days, months, and years, which he had loſt, even by his ſlighteſt malady, the

* Dr. Watts.

tooth-

tooth-ach. The celebrated M. Paſcal languiſhed, four years, under a diſtemper, which, without manifeſting itſelf by many outward ſigns, or occaſioning confinement, debarred him of the pleaſures and improvements of ſtudy. And it was the anxious office of his friends, to guard him from writing, or ſpeaking on any topics, which might exerciſe much thought or attention*. Mr. Pope's vital functions were ſo diſordered, that his life is emphatically ſaid to have been a *long diſeaſe*. The head-ach was his moſt frequent aſſailant; and he uſed to relieve it, by inhaling the ſteams of coffee, which he often required during thoſe hours, that ſhould have afforded the refreſhment of ſleep: Such was his earneſtneſs and ſolicitude in the proſecution of his literary undertakings, that Swift complains, he was never at leiſure for converſation. And one of lord Oxford's domeſtics related, that in the ſevere winter of 1740, ſhe was called from her bed four times, in

* Preface to Paſcal's Thoughts.

one

one night, to ſupply him with paper, that he might not loſe a thought*. The learned biographer, who ſarcaſtically records this fact, acknowledges, in the preface to the moſt laborious of his works, that he himſelf *triumphed* in the acquiſitions, which he ſhould diſplay to mankind, and indulged all the dreams of a Poet doomed, at laſt, to wake a Lexicographer. For he found that "one inquiry only gave occa-"ſion to another, that book referred to "book; that to ſearch was not always to "find; and to find was not always to be "informed; and that thus to purſue per-"fection, was, like the firſt inhabitants of "Arcadia, to chace the ſun, which, when "they had reached the hill where he ſeemed "to reſt, was ſtill beheld at the ſame diſ-"tance from them." There is a paſſage in Thomſon's *Caſtle of Indolence*, ſo applicable to this kind of folly, that I am tempted to tranſcribe it.

This globe pourtray'd the race of learned men,
Still at their books, and turning o'er the page,

* Johnſon's Lives of the Poets.

Backwards

Backwards and forwards: oft they ſnatch the pen,
As if inſpir'd, and in a Theſpian rage,
Then write and blot, as would your ruth engage.
Why, authors! all this ſcrawl and ſcribbling ſore?
To loſe the preſent, gain the future age,
Praiſed to be, when you can hear no more:
And much enrich'd with fame, when uſeleſs worldly
ſtore*?

The examples, which I have recited, are of men occupied chiefly, if not ſolely, in the walks of literature. But the taſte for knowledge may be cultivated, ſucceſsfully, in the buſy ſcenes of active life. And under theſe circumſtances, aſtoniſhing proficiency has been made, by the combined powers of genius and induſtry. The works of Tully, Pliny the elder, Bacon, Temple, and Bolingbroke, not to mention various other names of ancient and modern times, are ſufficient evidences of this fact. But neither the efforts of genius nor of induſtry can ward off ſickneſs, obviate ſolicitude, or ſtop thoſe unaccountable ebbings of the mind, which even a lowering ſky will ſome-

* Thomſon's Caſtle of Indolence, Canto I.

times produce. Cicero, notwithſtanding all his exultation, on the ſoothing influence of philoſophy, found himſelf under the neceſſity of retiring, at certain ſeaſons, to one of his country villas, ſituated near Aſtura. And in this ſolitary reſidence, which was covered with a thick wood, cut into ſhady walks, he uſed to paſs his hours of ſpleen and melancholy*.

But could we ſuppoſe health to be enjoyed without interruption, the ſpirits to be always lively and active, and all the intellectual faculties in a ſtate of uniform compoſure and energy, yet ſtill the progreſs in knowledge would be retarded by error, and obſtructed by the want of thoſe materials, for which we muſt depend on the accuracy, induſtry, and attainments of others. The temple of ſcience requires, for its elevation, the united labours of myriads of different artiſts; and the conſtruction of it will be perpetually incident to delays, by the indo-

* Middleton's Life of Cicero, vol. III. p. 296.

lence,

lence, unſkilfulneſs, and miſtakes of thoſe, who are employed in the undertaking. In ſuch circumſtances, to unite ardour with ſerenity, an enthuſiaſm for ſcience with patience under all the obſtructions of purſuit, from outward accident or inward infirmity, is a happineſs of which few can boaſt*. And the page of biography is filled with narratives of the querulouſneſs, impaired health, and mental imbecility of thoſe, who, by their writings, have informed, enlightened, and charmed mankind. Juſt views of the deſigns of Providence, in the government of the world, and particularly in the ſtructure of the human mind with reſpect to the progreſſive evolution of its faculties, would tend to obviate theſe evils, by reſtraining the inordinate aſpirations of literary ambition, and by correcting the inconſiſtency of expectation, from which they proceed.

Man is evidently conſtituted for two great ends; the attainment of virtue, and of

* Sir Iſaac Newton affords a ſingular example of temperate ardour, unremitting energy, and almoſt invariable equanimity.

knowledge. All his mental endowments have a reference to one or other of theſe final cauſes: On them, therefore, muſt depend the *perfection*, and *felicity* of his nature. But his moral powers ſeem more circumſcribed in their operation, and conſequently to admit of leſs extenſive culture, than thoſe of his underſtanding. For they are confined within the limits of rational, or at moſt of ſenſitive being, and with ſuch they can hold only a partial, and contracted correſpondence; whilſt the intellectual faculties have, for their object, the whole ſyſtem of nature, the infinitude of which is, perhaps, not leſs apparent in its minuteneſs, than immenſity. From theſe conſiderations, I am inclined to believe, that our ſtation, in the preſent world, is intended for near approaches towards the *maturity* of *virtue*; but for the *infancy* only of *knowledge*. And the wiſdom of this ordinance of the Deity is ſufficiently diſcernible: For as *knowledge* is *power*, the antecedent poſſeſſion of goodneſs, to direct it, muſt be eſſentially neceſſary to beatitude. The paſſions and affections are of ſpeedy growth, and often manifeſt

nifeſt great vigour in that ſeaſon of life, which is marked by the feebleneſs of reaſon. Increaſing years modify, direct, and meliorate them; but the diſcipline of experience ſerves rather to balance and reſtrain, than to augment their native ſtrength and energy. On the contrary, the mind proceeds by ſlow and regular gradations, in the attainment of ſcience. And our acquiſitions conſiſt not, ſolely, in the diſcovery of new objects or phænomena; but in the compariſon of theſe with what we already know*, and in aſcertaining their reciprocal dependencies, relations, or contrarieties. Thus knowledge is multiplied beyond the ſum of its ſeparate and component parts: And every acceſſion to it increaſes the ſtock in a ratio, that, we may devoutly truſt, will become greater and greater through all eternity.

But the bulk of mankind, in this ſtage of exiſtence, are in circumſtances, which

* Maclaurin's View of Sir Iſaac Newton's Philoſophy.

preclude any conſiderable advancement in learning. And we may obſerve, that the diſpenſation of the Goſpel gives no *direct* encouragement to it*, but applies all its precepts and exhortations to the cultivation of the heart. For the principles and practice of virtue are accommodated to every period and condition of life; and are exerciſed, refined, and exalted even by poverty, infirmity, ſickneſs, and old age; all which check the exertions, and depreſs the vigour of human genius. Rectitude of diſpoſition and of conduct bears a preciſe and permanent relation to all times, perſons, and occurrences. And if we aſcend from particular to general excellence, by contemplating the duty of man in the aggregate, we may form a diſtinct and adequate idea of *moral perfec-*

* Many paſſages, in the New Teſtament, according to a literal interpretation, ſeem *directly levelled againſt* human learning; which is deſcribed as vain, deceitful, traditionary, conſiſting of endleſs genealogies, idle babblings, and profane fables. But the beſt commentators are of opinion, that theſe cenſures have a reference only to the abſurd philoſophy of the Gnoſtics or Sophiſts, which was derived from the Egyptians.

tion.

tion. But what mind can expand itſelf to the conception of *complete intelligence!*— Every ſtep of our aſcent, on the hill of ſcience, preſents to the view a widening horizon; and the boundary of darkneſs increaſes, in proportion to the amplitude of thoſe enlightened regions, which it incircles.

It is this endleſs progreſſion of knowledge, which is apt to give the *love* of it an inordinate aſcendency over every other principle, ſo as to render it the *ruling paſſion* of the mind. And, as this paſſion does not, like the love of virtue, temper its particular exertions, by preſerving a due ſubordination in the powers which it calls forth into action, the wildeſt extravagances, of emotion and of conduct, have been diſplayed by thoſe, who ſubmit to its uncontrouled dominion. A great philoſopher has ruſhed naked, from the bath, into the ſtreets of a populous city, frantic with joy, on the ſolution of an intereſting problem. Tacitus informs us, that his excellent father-in-law,

Agricola, " was inclined to have engaged " more deeply, in the ſtudies of philoſophy " and law, than was ſuitable to a Roman " and a ſenator, if the diſcretion of his mo- " ther had not reſtrained the warmth and " vehemence of his diſpoſition: For his " high ſpirit, inflamed by the charms of " glory and exalted reputation, led him to " the purſuit, with more eagerneſs than " judgment. Reaſon, and riper years, mi- " tigated his ardour; and, what is a *moſt* " *difficult taſk, he preſerved moderation in ſci-* " *ence itſelf**." The emperor Marcus Antoninus, in one of his meditations, expreſſes fervent gratitude to the gods, that, by their favour, he had made no further advances in rhetoric, poetry, and other amuſing ſtudies; that he had not beſtowed too much time on voluminous reading, logical diſputations, or reſearches into phyſics; becauſe theſe might have engroſſed his mind, or diverted his attention from the peculiar duties of his

* Tacitus in Vit. Agric. See, alſo, Mr. Aikin's elegant tranſlation of this admirable piece of Biography, p. 65.

elevated

elevated ſtation*. Juſt and weighty, therefore, is the maxim of another ancient moraliſt, with which I ſhall conclude theſe reflections, that *we ſhould not reſt ſatisfied with the* WORDS *of wiſdom, without the* WORKS ; *nor turn philoſophy into an idle pleaſure, which was given us for a ſalutary remedy*†.

* Marc. Antonin. lib. I. † Seneca.

ON

ON THE

ADVANTAGES OF A TASTE

FOR THE GENERAL

BEAUTIES OF NATURE,

AND OF ART.

ME VERO PRIMUM DULCES ANTE OMNIA MUSÆ
ACCIPIANT! ---------

VIRG.

QUID MINUAT CURAS, QUID TE TIBI REDDAT
AMICUM.

HOR.

SECTION I.

ON THE

BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

THAT ſenſibility to beauty, which, when cultivated and improved, we term Taſte, is univerſally diffuſed through the human ſpecies: And it is moſt uniform with reſpect to thoſe objects, which, being out of our power, are not liable to variation, from accident, caprice, or faſhion. The verdant lawn, the ſhady grove, the variegated landſcape, the boundleſs ocean, and the ſtarry firmament, are contemplated with pleaſure by every attentive beholder. But the emotions of different ſpectators, though

though ſimilar in kind, differ widely in degree: And to reliſh, with full delight, the enchanting ſcenes of nature, the mind muſt be uncorrupted by avarice, ſenſuality, or ambition; quick in her ſenſibilities; elevated in her ſentiments; and devout in her affections. He, who poſſeſſes ſuch exalted powers of perception and enjoyment, may almoſt ſay, with the Poet,

"I care not, Fortune! what you me deny;
"You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace;
"You cannot ſhut the windows of the ſky,
"Thro' which Aurora ſhews her brightening face;
"You cannot bar my conſtant feet to trace
"The woods and lawns, by living ſtream, at eve:
"Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
"And I their toys to the great children leave:
"Of fancy, reaſon, virtue, nought can me bereave*."

Perhaps ſuch ardent enthuſiaſm may not be compatible with the neceſſary toils, and active offices, which Providence has aſſigned to the generality of men. But there are none, to whom ſome portion of it may

* Thomſon's Caſtle of Indolence.

not

not prove advantageous; and if it were cheriſhed, by each individual, in that degree which is conſiſtent with the indiſpenſable duties of his ſtation, the felicity of human life would be conſiderably augmented. From this ſource, the refined and vivid pleaſures of the imagination are almoſt entirely derived: And the elegant arts owe their choiceſt beauties to a taſte for the contemplation of nature. Painting and ſculpture are expreſs imitations of viſible objects: And where would be the charms of poetry, if diveſted of the imagery and embelliſhments, which ſhe borrows from rural ſcenes? Painters, ſtatuaries, and poets, therefore, are always ambitious to acknowledge themſelves the pupils of nature; and as their ſkill increaſes, they grow more and more delighted with every view of the animal and vegetable world. But the pleaſure reſulting from admiration is tranſient; and to cultivate taſte, without regard to its influence on the paſſions and affections, "is to rear a tree "for its bloſſoms, which is capable of "yielding

"yielding the richeſt, and moſt valuable "fruit*." Phyſical and moral beauty bear ſo intimate a relation to each other, that they may be conſidered as different gradations in the ſcale of excellence; and the knowledge and reliſh of the former, ſhould be deemed only a ſtep to the nobler and more permanent enjoyments of the latter.

Whoever has viſited the Leaſowes, in Warwickſhire, muſt have felt the force and propriety of an inſcription, which meets the eye, at the entrance into thoſe delightful grounds.

"Would you then taſte the tranquil ſcene?
"Be ſure your boſoms be ſerene;
"Devoid of hate, devoid of ſtrife,
"Devoid of all that poiſons life:
"And much it 'vails you, in their place
"To graft the love of human race†."

Now ſuch ſcenes contribute powerfully to inſpire that ſerenity, which is neceſſary to enjoy, and to heighten their beauties. By a ſecret ſympathy, the ſoul catches the

* Shenſtone. † Id.

harmony,

harmony, which ſhe contemplates; and the frame within, aſſimilates itſelf to that which is without. For,

" Who can forbear to ſmile with Nature? Can
" The ſtormy paſſions in the boſom roll,
" While every gale is peace, and every grove
" Is melody * ?"

In this ſtate of ſweet compoſure, we become ſuſceptible of virtuous impreſſions, from almoſt every ſurrounding object. The patient ox is viewed with generous complacency; the guileleſs ſheep, with pity; and the playful lamb raiſes emotions of tenderneſs and love. We rejoice with the horſe, in his liberty and exemption from toil, whilſt he ranges at large through enamelled paſtures; and the frolics of the colt would

* Thomſon's Seaſons, firſt edit.

Horace, when he breaks forth into the animated exclamation,

" *O, rus! quando ego te aſpiciam, quandoque licebit*
" *Nunc veterum libris, nunc ſomno et inertibus horis*
" *Ducere ſolicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ;*"

ſeems to regret the want of that heart-felt complacency, which the buſtle, pomp, and pleaſures of imperial Rome could not afford.

afford unmixed delight, did we not recollect the bondage, which he is ſoon to undergo. We are charmed with the ſongs of birds, ſoothed with the buzz of inſects, and pleaſed with the ſportive motions of fiſhes, becauſe theſe are expreſſions of enjoyment; and we exult in the felicity of the whole animated creation. Thus an equal and extenſive benevolence is called forth into exertion; and having *felt* a common intereſt in the gratifications of inferior beings, we ſhall be no longer indifferent to their ſufferings, or become wantonly inſtrumental in producing them.

It ſeems to be the intention of Providence, that the lower orders of animals ſhould be ſubſervient to the comfort, convenience, and ſuſtenance of man. But his right of dominion extends no farther; and if this right be exerciſed with mildneſs, humanity, and juſtice, the ſubjects of his power will be no leſs benefitted than himſelf. For various ſpecies of living creatures are annually multiplied by human art, improved in their

their perceptive powers by human culture, and plentifully fed by human induſtry. The relation, therefore, is reciprocal, between ſuch animals and man; and he may ſupply his own wants by the uſe of their labour, the produce of their bodies, and even the ſacrifice of their lives; whilſt he co-operates with all-gracious Heaven, in promoting HAPPINESS, the great end of exiſtence.

But though it be true, that *partial evil*, with reſpect to different orders of ſenſitive beings, may be *univerſal good*; and that it is a wiſe and benevolent inſtitution of nature, to make deſtruction itſelf, within certain limitations, the cauſe of an increaſe of life and enjoyment; yet a generous perſon will extend his compaſſionate regards to every individual, that ſuffers for his ſake: And, whilſt he ſighs

" E'en for the kid, or lamb, that pours its life
" Beneath the bloody knife*;"

* Lord Lyttelton.

he will naturally be ſolicitous to mitigate pain, both in duration and degree, by the gentleſt modes of inflicting it.

I am inclined to believe, however, that this ſenſe of humanity would ſoon be obliterated, and that the heart would grow callous to every ſoft impreſſion, were it not for the benignant influence of the ſmiling face of nature. The Count de Lauzun, when impriſoned by Louis XIV. in the caſtle of Pignerol, amuſed himſelf, during a long period of time, with catching flies, and delivering them to be devoured by a rapacious ſpider. Such an entertainment was equally ſingular and cruel; and inconſiſtent, I believe, with his former character, and ſubſequent turn of mind. But his cell had no window; and received only a glimmering light, from an aperture in the roof. In leſs unfavourable circumſtances, may we not preſume, that inſtead of ſporting with miſery, he would have releaſed the agonizing flies; and bidden them enjoy that freedom, of which he himſelf was bereaved?

But

But the taſte for natural beauty is ſubſervient to higher purpoſes, than thoſe which have been enumerated: And the cultivation of it not only refines and humanizes, but dignifies and exalts the affections. It elevates them to the admiration and love of that Being, who is the Author of all that is fair, ſublime, and good in the creation. Scepticiſm and irreligion are hardly compatible with the ſenſibility of heart*, which ariſes from a juſt and lively reliſh of the wiſdom, harmony, and order ſubſiſting in the world around us: And emotions of piety muſt ſpring up ſpontaneouſly in the boſom, that is in uniſon with all animated nature. Actuated by this divine inſpiration, man finds a fane in every grove: And glowing with devout fervour, he joins his ſong to the univerſal chorus; or muſes the praiſe of the Almighty, in more expreſſive ſilence. Thus they

" Whom Nature's works can charm, with GOD himſelf
" Hold converſe; grow familiar, day by day,
" With his conceptions; act upon his plan;
" And form to his, the reliſh of their ſouls †."

* See Gregory's Comparative View. † Akenſide.

SECTION II.

ON

A GENERAL TASTE FOR THE

FINE ARTS.

THE analogy of phyſical to moral beauty, and the connection ſubſiſting between a good heart, and a juſt reliſh for the general works of nature, have, I truſt, been fully eſtabliſhed. But, though all mankind are endued with the principle or faculty of taſte, it often lies almoſt entirely dormant, for want of cultivation. The ſavage Indian, wholly occupied in providing for the neceſſities of life, traverſes

verſes the deſart, and the flowery lawn, with equal indifference. Eager in the chace, he ſcarcely turns his eye, as he paſſes along, to contemplate the golden beams of the ſetting ſun, reflected from the lake of Erie. Or if he quit his native wilds, in the ſummer ſeaſon, to fiſh in the river Ohio, he ſits in his canoe, inattentive to the awful cataract, and views the moſt ſplendid ſcene in the creation, with ſlight and tranſient emotions. Nor are the generality of men, even in civilized ſociety, or in the higher walks of life, fully qualified to comprehend or to admire the *aſſemblage* of beauties, which the viſible creation preſents to the view of an enlightened imagination. Single objects, or detached parts, attract the notice and engroſs the attention: And the mind by an eaſy tranſition, paſſes to the recognition and reliſh of thoſe operations of human ſkill, which are their ſymbols, or repreſentations. For the elegant arts are all imitative in their eſſence and origin. Thus muſic, by the variation of its movements and tones, calls up, into the mind,

ideas, both of the natural, animal, and rational world. The murmuring brook, and boiſterous ocean; the ſtormy wind, and gentle zephyr; the wild roar of the lion, the bleating of the lamb, and the plaintive melody of the nightingale, are all within the compaſs of its mimetic enchantments. Theſe are extended even to the paſſions and emotions of the human heart; ſo as to typify anger, pity, remorſe, delight, and ſorrow. Painting occupies a ſtill wider field of ſimilitude and aſſociation; diſplaying all thoſe objects, which are known to us, in nature, by diverſity of figure, or the various ſhades of colour. Even motions and ſounds may be expreſſed by this wonderful art. For, as they are accompanied, in many inſtances, with a certain configuration, or poſition of parts, the ſign is readily adopted for the thing ſignified. And we ſee or hear upon the canvas, the horſe *ſtarting* aghaſt at the ſudden view of the lion; the ſoldier *running* towards his dying general with the news of victory; the cock *crowing* at the denial of

of Peter; and the water-fall *daſhing* againſt the rocks below*.

Poetry, under which term I mean to comprehend all numerous and rhetorical compoſition, derives moſt of its charms from alluſions, ſimilies, metaphors, or deſcriptions; and theſe are obviouſly imitative. In this way, its powers are ſo tranſcendent, that, even a ſingle epithet will ſometimes produce a repreſentation more pictureſque, than the pencil of Pouſſin, or Salvator Roſa, ever exhibited. The firſt line, in the following ſtanza of Gray's elegy, will afford an example, and a proof, of what is here advanced.

Now fades the *glimmering* landſcape on the ſight,
And all the air a ſolemn ſtillneſs holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowſy tinklings lull the diſtant folds†.

The accuracy and force of the word *glimmering* muſt be felt by any one, who has viewed, with attention, an extenſive proſpect, about an hour after ſun-ſet.

* Mr. Stubbs's Picture. The death of General Wolfe, &c.

† Gray's Elegy.

The

The mimetic arts have ſome advantages over nature herſelf; for the imitations, with which they preſent us, are generally agreeable, even though their archetypes be, in themſelves, indifferent or diſguſting. The mind delights in compariſon; and this pleaſure is heightened by the recognition of reſemblance, and by the contemplation of ingenious deſign, or maſterly execution. Who can read Mr. Gay's deſcription of a poor benighted traveller, without being charmed at the veriſimilitude of the narration; which is, at once, ſo clear, ſo diſcriminative, and circumſtantial, that we become, as it were, ſpectators of a ſcene, which either in its parts, or in the whole, is exactly correſpondent to our recollection and experience.

It is evident, therefore, that the fine arts have, for their object, the gratification of the ſame faculty, which perceives and reliſhes the charms of nature. And by analogy we may infer, that the exerciſe, which they give to the taſte, is favourable

to

to the virtuous affections of the heart. This truth has been ſo long acknowledged, that the obſervation of the Poet is now received, as an eſtabliſhed maxim in ethics;

Ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec ſinit eſſe feros *.

But the validity of this canon is not to be admitted, without ſome reſtriction. The energies of muſic, painting, and poetry, are ſo powerful and multifarious, that they have, at command, all the emotions and paſſions of the ſoul.

---------- *pectus inaniter angunt,*
Irritant, mulcent, falſis terroribus implent †.

They may excite or reſtrain, kindle or extinguiſh paſſion, and thus, according to their application, become the inſtruments either of vice, or of virtue. They are incident, likewiſe, to numberleſs adventitious aſſociations, which, counteracting or diverſifying their natural and original tendency, may make them adminiſter to vanity,

* Ovid. † Hor. Epiſt. I. lib. II.

oſtentation,

oſtentation, pride, envy, and jealouſy. Such diſpoſitions are ſometimes found in the profeſſors of theſe arts; and the diſplay of them, in men of diſtinguiſhed genius and merit, raiſes in our minds a painful ſtruggle of diſcordant emotions*.

Whoever, therefore, yields himſelf, implicitly, to the magic deluſions of the fine arts, is in danger of having his judgment impaired, his heart corrupted, and his capacity deſtroyed for the ordinary duties and enjoyments of life. To this ſource may be traced all the follies and extravagance of what is termed VERTU. Admiration ſtimulates the deſire of poſſeſſion, however immoderate the price; poſſeſſion turns the admiration of the object to ourſelves; and this is ſucceeded by a fond and abſurd impatience to diſplay a ſuperiority over others, both in taſte and property.

* Who would not laugh, if ſuch a one there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he? POPE.

No reflection is meant, by the quotation of theſe lines, on the very reſpectable character to whom they allude. They were dictated by reſentment, and reprobated by ſome of the Poet's beſt friends.

What

What brought Sir Viſto's ill-got wealth to waſte?
Some dæmon whiſper'd, "Viſto, have a taſte."
Heaven viſits with a taſte the wealthy fool;
And needs no rod, but Ripley with a rule*.

But it is further to be obſerved, that, as an acute reliſh for beauty, and a quick diſcernment of deformity are, in a certain proportion, neceſſarily connected together; the latter may become predominant, through pride, affectation, or too frequent indulgence. Whenever this happens, taſte will prove the inſtrument of pain, and not of pleaſure: And the faſtidious feelings of diſguſt, ſo often excited, will be transferred, from the works of human ſkill, to human life; rendering the temper petulant, moroſe, and ſelfiſh. But a perverſion of the powers of the imagination is no argument againſt their proper culture, and well regulated application. For reaſon itſelf is liable to abuſe; and philoſophy and religion have been rendered ſubſervient to ſcepticiſm and ſuperſtition.

* Pope's Moral Eſſays.

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE ALLIANCE OF

NATURAL HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY,

WITH POETRY.

---------- NIL SCRIBENS IPSE DOCEBO
UNDE PARENTUR OPES; QUID ALAT FORMETQUE
POETAM.

---------- VATIBUS ADDERE CALCAR.
HOR.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON THE ALLIANCE OF NATURAL HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY, WITH POETRY*.

THE maxim of lord Verulam, that "knowledge is power," is no leſs applicable to poeſy, than to philoſophy. For whether we engage in this delightful purſuit as an art, or as a ſcience, it is evident that the ability to convey, and the capacity to reliſh its peculiar pleaſures, muſt be exactly proportioned to our acquaintance with the means either of communicating

* In this Eſſay, the author has confined his views, chiefly, to the application of natural knowledge, to that branch of the poetic art, which relates to DESCRIPTION; reſerving, for ſome future occaſion, the alliance of phyſics, with poetical IMAGERY and MORAL ANALOGY.

municating or enjoying them. The works of creation are the great ſtorehouſe, where theſe means are to be ſought. And an inquiſitive attention to every ſurrounding object is eſſential to the poet, and highly uſeful to the lover of poetry. He, who extends his reſearches beyond the ſurface of things, will find that the treaſures of nature are inexhauſtible. For it is literally, no leſs than metaphorically true, that

> - - - - Many a gem, of pureſt ray ſerene,
> The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to bluſh unſeen,
> And waſte its ſweetneſs on the deſert air*.

Yet few have been the labourers in this rich harveſt of ſcience, ſince the days of Theocritus; and the paſtoral deſcriptions and images of that ancient Sicilian bard, have been uſed like hereditary property, by all ſucceeding poets. In the ruder ages of the world, the modes of life were peculiarly favourable to the obſervation of nature. Rural ſcenery was continually before the eyes; and the culture of land, or the care

* Gray's Elegy.

of

of ſheep and cattle, conſtituted the occupation of the greateſt perſonages. This furniſhed a rich ſupply of original materials, which muſt for ever be withheld from thoſe, who immure themſelves in cities, and contemplate only the operations of art. Writers, therefore, of this claſs, are humbly ſatisfied to be mere copyiſts of others; and adopt, without reſerve, the figures, alluſions, and repreſentations, of their poetical predeceſſors. But ſcience, which is borrowed, is often miſunderſtood: And it is not in the power, even of genius itſelf, to obviate the miſtakes which are committed through ignorance. Who, for inſtance, can notice the countenance of the Ox, without perceiving, that it diſplays meekneſs, patience, and the moſt inoffenſive diſpoſition*; and that the eyes of this animal are of no unuſual dimenſion? Yet, in many verſions of Homer, that divine poet, ſo converſant with zoology, is made to ſtyle

* Thomſon thus deſcribes the ox:

- - - - - - - - And the plain ox,
That honeſt, harmleſs, guileleſs animal.

the artful, proud, and paſſionate queen of the gods "Ox-eyed Juno." This miſtake of the tranſlators has evidently ariſen, from the want of attention to nature. And M. Dacier has ſhewn, that the particle βο is only an augmentative, ſignifying *(valde)* large-eyed; and that it has no direct relation to the ox. The error, which Dr. Young has fallen into, in his paraphraſe on Job, is more pardonable; becauſe an Engliſh poet, who has never ſeen the CROCODILE, might be ignorant that his eyes are remarkably ſmall. This animal is ſuppoſed to be the Leviathan, deſcribed in the 41ſt chapter of that book. And, if the explanation be true, the following paſſage muſt have a reference to the brightneſs, and not to the magnitude, of his organs of ſight, as my friend Mr. Aikin has judiciouſly remarked*. *By his neezings a light doth ſhine; and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.* Dr. Young, by a miſconception of the original, has rendered this ſtrong figure ſtill more hyperbolical.

* See his elegant and ingenious Eſſay on the Application of Natural Hiſtory to Poetry.

"Large

" Large is his front; and when his burniſh'd eyes
" Lift their *broad* lids, the morning ſeems to riſe."

When the rebellious angels are deſcribed, by Milton, as converted into ſerpents, he ſays,

- - - - - - - - - dreadful was the din
Of hiſſing through the hall, - - - - -
Scorpion and aſp, and amphiſbæna dire,
Ceraſtes horn'd, hydrus, and elops drear *.

A celebrated critic † aſſerts that it is a miſtake to enumerate the ſcorpion and the aſp amongſt the ſerpents; and that the elops was a fiſh, much admired by the ancients. It has been ſhewn, however, that Milton, in this paſſage, has the authority of Pliny, Lucan, and Nicander.

In a former eſſay I have remarked, concerning the mimetic powers of poetry, that

* Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, book X.

† Dr. Bentley.——Dr. Johnſon, in the plan of his great Dictionary, addreſſed to lord Cheſterfield, when treating of the importance of the explanation of appellatives, ſays that Milton, with ſuch aſſiſtance, would not have diſpoſed ſo improperly of his *elops*, and his *ſcorpion*; nor would Shakeſpeare have made the *woodbine* entwine the *honeyſuckle*.

a ſingle word will ſometimes produce a repreſentation more pictureſque, than the pencil of Pouſſin, or of Salvator Roſa, ever exhibited. And the obſervation was exemplified by this line of Mr. Gray;

" Now fades the glimmering landſcape on the ſight,"

in which the accuracy and force of the epithet *glimmering* will be felt by any one, who has viewed, with attention, an extenſive proſpect, about an hour after ſun-ſet*. But a gentleman of this county, who has inſerted the foregoing line in a very elegant little poem, by an unfortunate tranſpoſition, has entirely deſtroyed its beauty, truth, and energy.

" Now fades the landſcape on the *glimmering ſight*."

Many original writers, of the moſt diſtinguiſhed reputation, have deviated widely from nature, by adopting facts and opinions without examination, or on inſufficient authority. Thus the poet Lucretius, who

* Eſſay on the Advantages of a Taſte for Nature and the Fine Arts.

flouriſhed

flouriſhed about fifty years before the Chriſtian æra, has ſanctioned the vulgar error, that, in the JAUNDICE, objects are painted on the retina, of the ſame colour with that, which tinges the external coat of the eye; and has given a theory of it in conformity to the philoſophy of the Epicurean ſchool.

Lurida præterea fiunt quæcunque tuentur
Arquati, quia luroris de corpore eorum
Semina multa fluunt, ſimulacris obvia rerum;
Multaque ſunt oculis in eorum denique miſta,
Quæ contage ſua palloribus omnia pingunt.*

Beſides, whatever jaundic'd eyes do view,
Look pale, as well as thoſe, and yellow too,
For lurid parts fly off, with nimble wings,
And meet the diſtant coming forms of things:
And others lurk within the eyes, and ſeize,
And ſtain, with pale, the entering images†.

Mr. Pope has authorized the ſame obſervation, in his Eſſay on Criticiſm.

" All ſeems infected, that th' infected ſpy,
" As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye."

* Lucretius, lib. IV. line 333.

† Creech's Tranſ. of Lucret. book IV. line 344.

And the like miſtaken alluſion is more than once repeated in an admirable poem, lately puliſhed by Mr. Hayley.

" The bards of Britain, with unjaundic'd eyes,
" Will glory to behold ſuch rivals riſe*.

" On faireſt names, from every blemiſh free;
" Save what the jaundic'd eyes of party ſee."

I am inclined to believe there is no ſufficient foundation for this opinion. Galen indeed ſpeaks of yellow viſion, as common to icteric patients; and Sextus Empyricus has delivered the ſame account: But their relation is neither confirmed by experience, nor conſonant to reaſon. In the worſt caſes of the jaundice, now known, I believe this ſymptom has no exiſtence; and I do not find it noticed in the records of Aretæus, Celſus, or Hippocrates.

The ſuppoſition, that the fertilizing quality of SNOW ariſes from nitrous ſalts, which

* On Epic Poetry, epiſt. IV.

it

it is ſuppoſed to acquire in the act of freezing, is void of foundation; becauſe the moſt accurate experiments have demonſtrated, that it contains no nitre, and only a ſmall portion of calcareous earth. Falſe philoſophy, ſays an eminent chemiſt*, firſt gave riſe to this idea, and poetry has contributed to diffuſe the error. Thus Mr. Philips;

> --------- O may'ſt thou often ſee
> Thy furrows whiten'd by the woolly rain,
> Nutritious; ſecret nitre lurks within
> The porous wet; quickening the languid glebe.

But the following lines, of Mr. Thomſon, do not appear to me to be liable to the ſame objection. For the term *ſalts*, with the annexed epithet *little*, may be applied, without much poetical licence, to the cryſtals of water, formed by freezing.

> What art thou, froſt?
> Is not thy potent energy unſeen,
> Myriads of *little ſalts*, or hook'd, or ſhap'd
> Like double wedges, and diffus'd immenſe
> Thro' water, earth and ether?

* Dr. Watſon, now Biſhop of Landaff, in his Chemical Eſſays.

The

The operation of froſt is here aſcribed to its mechanical powers. For, by binding the ſurface of the earth, it arreſts the exhalations, as they aſcend from the parts below, and thus retains a nutritious *pabulum*, to be applied, at the proper ſeaſon, to the roots of plants. But it chiefly meliorates the ſoil, by pulverizing the particles which compoſe it, and fitting them for the abſorption of the vernal dews and rains.

Whenever PHILOSOPHY is introduced into poetry, truth, for the moſt part, is eſſential to its power of giving pleaſure. And our great epic writer ſeems to deſcend, ſometimes, from the majeſty of his work, by mixing, with modern diſcoveries, the groundleſs opinions of the ancients. Thus, when Raphael addreſſes Adam, concerning the great ſyſtem of nature, he ſays,

---------- Other ſuns, perhaps,
With their attendant moons, thou wilt deſcry,
Communicating *male* and *female* light*.

* Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, book VIII. line 148.

The

The idea of *male* light being communicated by the *ſun*, and *female* light by the *moon*, probably originated, in the mind of Milton, from his intimate acquaintance with the writings of Pliny; who mentions, as a tradition, "that the ſun is a maſculine ſtar, "drying all things, but that the moon is "a ſoft and feminine ſtar, of diſſolving "power: And that thus the balance of "nature is preſerved; ſome of the ſtars "binding the elements; and others looſen-"ing them*."

The HARMONY of the SPHERES, or muſical revolution of the heavenly bodies in their ſeveral orbits, was firſt taught by the Pythagoreans; who ſeem to have derived this fanciful doctrine from analogy. For it was obſerved, by theſe philoſophers, that a muſical chord produces the ſame note,

* *Solis ardore ſiccatur liquor; et hoc eſſe maſculum ſidus accepimus, torrens cuncta ſorbenſque.—E contrario ferunt lunam femineum ac molle ſidus, atque nocturnum ſolvere humorem.—Ita penſari naturæ vices, ſemperque ſufficere, aliis ſiderum elementa cogentibus, aliis vero fundentibus.* Hiſt. Nat. Lib. II. Cap. 100. See alſo the notes to Newton's edit. of Par. Loſt.

as

as one double in length, when the force is quadruple with which the latter is ſtretched: Hence they ſuppoſed that the gravity of a planet is quadruple the gravity of a planet, at a double diſtance. And as any muſical chord may become uniſon to a leſſer chord, of the ſame kind, if its tenſion be increaſed in the ſame proportion as the ſquare of its length is greater; ſo the gravity of a planet may become equal to the gravity of another planet, nearer to the ſun, provided it be increaſed in proportion as the ſquare of its diſtance from the ſun is greater. If, therefore, muſical chords be extended from the ſun to each planet, to bring them into uniſon, it would be requiſite, to increaſe or diminiſh their tenſions, in the ſame proportions, as would be ſufficient to render the gravity of the planets equal*. This notion of the Pythagoreans is ſo pleaſing to the imagination, that it is not ſurprizing the poets have adopted it. And Milton

* Vid. Plin. Lib. II. Cap. 22. Macrob. Lib. II. Cap. 1. See alſo, Maclaurin's account of Sir Iſaac Newton's Philoſophical Diſcoveries, page 34.

has

has given ſuch a view of it, as wants nothing but philoſophical truth to render it delightful.

> Myſtical dance, which yonder ſtarry ſphere
> Of planets, and of fix'd, in all her wheels
> Reſembles neareſt; mazes intricate,
> Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular,
> Then moſt, when moſt irregular they ſeem;
> And in their motions harmony divine
> So ſmooths her charming tones, that GOD's own ear
> Liſtens delighted *.

Mr. Pope has not only ſuppoſed the actual exiſtence of this heavenly harmony, but that it is poſſible the human ear might have been ſo conſtituted, as to have been ſenſible of it.

> If Nature thunder'd in his opening ears,
> And ſtunn'd him with the muſic of the ſpheres;
> How would he wiſh that heav'n had left him ſtill,
> The whiſp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill †?

Thoſe, who are in poſſeſſion of the firſt or ſecond edition of Thomſon's Seaſons,

* Paradiſe Loſt, book V. line 620.

† Eſſay on Man, epiſt. I. ver. 201.

will

will find a groſs geographical miſtake, in the hymn which is annexed to them. Towards the cloſe of this beautiful poem, the author expreſſes his pious confidence in the univerſal wiſdom, and impartial benevolence of the Deity; and aſſerts, that the ſame regular ſeaſons, which he had deſcribed with ſuch fervour of delight in the preceding work, are equally experienced in every part of the globe.

> ------ God is ever preſent, ever felt,
> In the void waſte, as in the city full;
> Roll the *ſame kindred ſeaſons* round the world,
> In all *apparent*, wiſe and good in all.

The two laſt lines are omitted, in the ſubſequent editions of this poem.

The SYSTEM of PHILOSOPHY, which is now received, independent of its ſuperiority in point of truth, infinitely exceeds in extent, elevation, and grandeur, that of the ancients. The poet, therefore, ſhould be well verſed in the ſcience of phyſics, not only becauſe he can ſeldom deviate from it,

it*, without injury to his compoſitions, but becauſe theſe may derive from it ſublimity, embelliſhment, or grace. Aſtronomy, in particular, furniſhes ſuch magnificent ideas, and boundleſs views, that imagination can hardly graſp, much leſs exalt or amplify them. "The objects which we commonly "call great," ſays an eminent writer, "va- "niſh, when we contemplate the vaſt body "of the earth; the terraqueous globe itſelf "is ſoon loſt in the ſolar ſyſtem. In ſome "parts it is ſeen as a diſtant ſtar; in others

* In the following lines, the thought becomes low, by being unphiloſophical.

> ---------- O thieviſh night,
> Why ſhould'ſt thou, but for ſome felonious end,
> In thy *dark lanthorn* thus cloſe up the ſtars
> That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their *lamps*
> With everlaſting *oil*. Milton's Comus.

The ſentiment is more brilliant, in a ſubſequent paſſage of this poem, but not more ſolid. And it is rendered abſurd by the leaſt reflection, on the impoſſibility of ſinking the vaſt orbs of the ſun and moon, in the ocean; or, as it is here improperly ſtyled, the *flat ſea*.

> Virtue could ſee to do what virtue would,
> By her own radiant light; though ſun and moon
> Were in the *flat ſea* ſunk. Id.

"it

"it is unknown; or viſible only at rare "times, to vigilant obſervers. The ſun "itſelf dwindles into a ſtar; Saturn's vaſt "orbit, and the orbits of all the comets, "crowd into a point, when viewed from "numberleſs ſpaces between the earth and "the neareſt of the fixed ſtars. Other ſuns "kindle light to illuminate other ſyſtems, "where our ſun's rays are unperceived; but "they alſo are ſwallowed up in the vaſt "expanſe. Even all the ſyſtems of the "ſtars, that ſparkle in the cleareſt ſky, "muſt poſſeſs a corner only of that ſpace, "through which ſuch ſyſtems are diſperſed: "Since more ſtars are diſcovered in one "conſtellation, by the teleſcope, than the "naked eye perceives in the whole heavens. "After we have riſen ſo high, and left all "definite meaſures far behind us, we find "ourſelves no nearer to a term or limit; "for all this is nothing to what may be "diſplayed in the infinite expanſe, beyond "the remoteſt ſtars that have hitherto been "diſcovered*." This deſcription, though

* Maclaurin's View of Sir Iſaac Newton's Diſcoveries, p. 16.

delivered

delivered in the chaſte language of a mathematician, is, in ſentiment, ſo truly ſublime, that it wants nothing but numbers to conſtitute it poetry. And, in the following lines, it appears with all the charms of grace and harmony.

---------- Seiz'd in thought,
On Fancy's wild and roving wing I ſail
From the green borders of the peopled earth,
And the pale moon, her duteous fair attendant;
From ſolitary Mars; from the vaſt orb
Of Jupiter, whoſe huge gigantic bulk
Dances in ether, like the lighteſt leaf;
To the dim verge, the ſuburbs of the ſyſtem,
Where cheerleſs Saturn 'midſt his wat'ry moons
Girt with a lucid zone, majeſtic ſits
In gloomy grandeur, like an exil'd queen
Amongſt her weeping handmaids: fearleſs thence
I launch into the trackleſs deeps of ſpace,
Where burning round ten thouſand ſuns appear,
Of elder beam; which aſk no leave to ſhine
Of our terreſtrial ſtar, nor borrow light
From the proud regent of our ſcanty day;
Sons of the morning, firſt-born of creation,
And only leſs than Him who marks their track,
And guides their fiery wheels. Here muſt I ſtop?
Or is their aught beyond? What hand, unſeen,
Impels me onward, through the glowing orbs
Of habitable nature; far remote,

To the dread confines of eternal night,
To ſolitudes of vaſt unpeopled ſpace,
The deſerts of creation, wide and wild;
Where embryo ſyſtems, and unkindled ſuns
Sleep in the womb of chaos! Fancy droops,
And thought, aſtoniſh'd, ſtops her bold career*!

Homer, whoſe knowledge of the magnitude and diſtances of the heavenly bodies, muſt have been very confined, never diſplays a more glowing imagination, than when he introduces them to our notice. And no one can view his animated picture of a moonlight and ſtarry night, without feeling himſelf tranſported to the ſcene, which it exhibits.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure ſpreads her ſacred light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure ſhed,
And tip with ſilver every mountain's head;
Then ſhine the vales, the rocks in proſpect riſe,
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies;

* Mrs. Barbauld's Evening Meditation.

The

The conſcious ſwains, rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light*.

Mr. Pope has tranſlated this paſſage with ſingular felicity; and perhaps it may be the faſtidiouſneſs of criticiſm to remark, that a *refulgent moon* is not compatible with *vivid* planets, and *glowing ſtars*; becauſe theſe fainter lights are eclipſed by the ſplendour of that luminary. But, though Homer, probably, did not mean to introduce a full moon, as his commentator Euſtathius has obſerved, yet a judicious Poet has choſen to leave this bright orb out of the evening ſcenery, which ſhe has ſo admirably pourtrayed.

- - - - - - - - - - - Nature's ſelf is huſh'd;
And but a ſcatter'd leaf which ruſtles thro'
The thick-wove foliage; not a ſound is heard
To break the midnight air.
- - - - - - - - - - - 'Tis now the hour
When contemplation, from her ſunleſs haunts,
Moves forward; and with radiant finger points
Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven
Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether
One boundleſs blaze; ten thouſand trembling fires

* Pope's Homer's Iliad, book VIII. line 687.

And dancing luſtres, where th' unſteady eye,
Reſtleſs and dazzled, wanders unconfin'd
O'er all this field of glories *.

It may be amuſing to contraſt the foregoing deſcriptions of the night, with thoſe recorded by Mr. Macpherſon, in his tranſlation of the poems of Oſſian. Five bards, paſſing the night in the houſe of a Caledonian chief, went out ſeverally to make their obſervations; and returned with an extempore deſcription of the night, which, as appears from the poem, was in the month of October. I ſhall here recite part of the compoſition of the fourth bard, as it is moſt analogous to the paſſages, above quoted.

" Night is calm and fair; blue, ſtarry,
" ſettled is night. The winds, with the
" clouds, are gone. They ſink behind the
" hill. The moon is upon the mountain.
" Trees gliſter; ſtreams ſhine on the rock.
" Bright rolls the ſettled lake; bright the
" ſtream of the vale.

* Mr. Barbauld's Even. Med.

" The

"The breezes drive the blue miſt, ſlowly "over the narrow vale. It riſes on the hill, "and joins its head to heaven.—Night is "ſettled, calm, blue, ſtarry, bright with "the moon. Receive me not, my friends; "for lovely is the night*."

In ſouthern latitudes the HEAVENLY BODIES are far more reſplendent, than when viewed through the thick atmoſphere of Britain. It is ſaid, that, in Jamaica, the *milky way* is tranſcendently bright, and that the planet Venus appears like a little moon, glittering with ſo vivid a beam, as to render viſible the ſhadows of trees, buildings, and other objects†. The ſetting ſun, in that iſland, exhibits a ſpectacle peculiarly auguſt. His apparent circumference being enlarged by his ſtation in the horizon; and the refraction of the rays of light retaining in view his glorious orb, he ſeems to reſt awhile, from his career, on the ſummit of the mountains. Then he ſuddenly vaniſhes, leaving

* Oſſian's Croma, p. 255, 4to edit.

† Hiſt. of Jamaica, book II. p. 371.

a train of ſplendour, that ſtreaks the clouds with the moſt lively and variegated tints, which fancy can conceive*. In deſcribing ſuch a ſpectacle as this, the majeſty of the great luminary generally abſorbs the whole attention of the poet; and he takes little notice of the effect of the ſun's declination, on terreſtrial objects. Yet it is certain, that a landſcape, of ſmall extent, never appears more beautiful, than at the cloſe of a ſummer's day. Several cauſes then conſpire to give a richneſs to the ſcene, and no one ſo powerfully, as the heightened verdure of the herbage, ariſing, probably, from the combination of blue and yellow colours, reflected, at the ſame time, from the golden clouds, and azure ſky. Perhaps the increaſed refraction, and ſoftened luſtre of the evening rays of light, may alſo contribute to this effect. For the herbage at that time appears, not only more green, but more copious too: Inſomuch that a paſture, which looks *bare* at noon, ſeems to

* Hiſt. of Jamaica, book II. p. 372.

abound

abound in graſs at ſun-ſet. When thick black vapours hover about the weſtern ſun, and preſent only ſmall illumined edges, I have obſerved a circle of green, ſurrounding his diſk; an appearance, which I know not how to account for, but from the union, above deſcribed, of blue and yellow rays. This phenomenon I ſaw, in great perfection, as I was lately travelling over the mountains, which divide the counties of Lancaſter and York. The day was wet and ſtormy; and the war of elements, which I beheld, gave me ſome faint idea of what is experienced on the Alps and Andes; where the traveller views clouds at his feet, and coruſcations of lightning darting, on all ſides, below him. Numberleſs meteors, which are unknown on the plain, preſent themſelves to his aſtoniſhed ſight; ſuch as circular rainbows, parhelia, the ſhadow of the mountain projected on the air, and his own image adorned with a kind of glory, round the head*. How tremendous

* Ulloa, Vol. I. Acad. Par. 1744. Prieſtley on Light and Colours, page 599, &c.

is the account, which Don Ulloa has given, of his ſtation on the top of Cotopaxi, a mountain in Peru, more than three geographical miles above the level of the ſea! Here he was ſtationed, a conſiderable length of time, for the purpoſe of meaſuring a degree of the meridian; and the hardſhips which he ſuffered, from the intenſeneſs of the cold, and the ſtorms to which he was expoſed, almoſt exceed belief. "The ſky," ſays he, "was generally obſcured with "thick fogs; but, when theſe were diſ-"perſed, and the clouds moved, by their "gravity, nearer the ſurface of the earth, "they ſurrounded the mountain to a vaſt "diſtance, repreſenting the ſea, with our "rock, like an iſland in the center of it. "When this happened, we heard the horrid "noiſes of the tempeſts, which diſcharged "themſelves on Quito, and the neighbour-"ing countries. We ſaw the lightnings "iſſue from the clouds, and heard the "thunders roll far beneath us. And, whilſt "the lower regions were involved in tem-"peſts of thunder and rain, we enjoyed a

"delightful

" delightful ſerenity. The wind was huſhed, " the ſky clear, and the enlivening rays of " the ſun moderated the ſeverity of the " cold*." How would a ſcene, like this, have been felt and deſcribed by the Poet, of whom it is ſaid,

> - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - When lightning fires
> The arch of heaven, and thunders rock the ground;
> When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
> And ocean, groaning from his loweſt bed,
> Heaves his tempeſtuous billows to the ſky:
> Amid the mighty uproar, while below
> The nations tremble, Shakeſpeare looks abroad
> From ſome high cliff, ſuperior, and enjoys
> The elemental war†.

The awful and gloomy grandeur of the mountainous ſcenery of Peru is, perhaps, leſs favourable to the deſcriptive powers of the poet, than the proſpects which ſome of the Alpine countries of Europe afford. In the cultivated diſtricts of Switzerland, particularly, the views furniſh the happieſt

* Ulloa's Voyage, vol. I. p. 231.

† Akenſide's Pleaſures of Imagination, book III. line 590.

combination

combination of the ſublime and beautiful. And I ſhall give a ſhort abſtract of the obſervations made, by a late traveller, on the Mole, a mountain, which riſes near five thouſand feet above the lake of Geneva, and is ſituated about eighteen miles eaſtward of that city. "In my aſcent," ſays Sir George Shuckburgh, "I ſaw the ſun, "riſing behind one of the neighbouring "Alps, with a moſt beautiful effect; and "the ſhadow of the mountain, we were "then upon, extended fifteen or twenty "miles weſt. Before me, at ſome diſtance, "was ſpread the plain, in which lay Geneva "and the lake; behind me roſe the Dole, "and the long chain of Mont Jura. A "little to the left, and much nearer, lay "Mont Saleve, which, from this height, "appeared an inconſiderable hill. To the "right and left, nothing but immenſe rocks, "and pointed mountains, of every poſſible "ſhape, forming tremendous precipices. "In the vale beneath, ſeveral little hamlets, "and the moſt beautiful paſturages, with "the river Arve, winding and ſoftening the "ſcene.

" ſcene. From whence aroſe a thick eva-
" poration, collecting itſelf into clouds,
" which, on the lake, that was quite covered
" with them, had the appearance of a ſea
" of cotton; the ſun's beams playing on the
" upper ſurface of them, with thoſe tints,
" which are ſeen in a fine evening. To
" the ſouth-weſt, appeared the lake of An-
" necy; behind us lay the Glacieres, and,
" amongſt them, towering above all the reſt,
" ſtood Mount Blanc. The circumference
" of the horizon might be about two hun-
" dred Engliſh miles; and though not one
" of the moſt extenſive, yet certainly one of
" the moſt varied in the world*."

It is with a reluctance, ſimilar, perhaps, to what this philoſophical traveller experienced, when he deſcended from the Mole, that I quit the imaginary viſion of this enchanting ſcene. But it is neceſſary to remark, that, however ſtriking ſuch complex and ſublime repreſentations may be,

* Philoſoph. Tranſact. 1777, p. 536.

they

they can only be introduced occaſionally by the poet; whoſe talents for deſcription ſhould be chiefly exerciſed in the judicious ſelection and pictureſque diſplay of ſmall groups, or individual objects. Like the magnet, he muſt draw forth what is valuable, even from the rudeſt materials; and nicely diſcriminate, in every ſurrounding object, thoſe attributes, which can be rendered ſubſervient to his art. We are informed, that Thomſon was wont to wander whole days and nights in the country: And, in ſuch ſequeſtered walks, he acquired, by the moſt minute attention, a knowledge of all the myſteries of nature. Theſe he has wrought into his Seaſons with the colouring of Titian, the wildneſs of Salvator Roſa, and the energy of Raphael.

Milton appears to have been no leſs familiar with nature, than Thomſon, and equally happy in his portraits of her moſt pleaſing forms. He catches every diſtinguiſhing feature; and gives to what he deſcribes, ſuch glowing tints of life and reality, that

that we have it, as it were, in full view before our eyes. How perfect is the image, in the following lines!

> - - - - - - - - The ſwan, with *arched neck*
> Between her *white wings mantling, proudly rows*
> Her ſtate, with *oary feet* *.

Indeed the whole account of the creation, which the Archangel relates to Adam, is ſo engaging and pictureſque, that it would fully refute the criticiſm of a learned Italian, if the poem contained no other beauties of a ſimilar kind. "The poets beyond the "Alps," ſays Abbè Winckelmann, "ſpeak "*figuratively*, but without *painting*. The "ſtrange and ſometimes terrifying figures, "which conſtitute almoſt all the grandeur "of Milton, are by no means the *objects* of "a *pencil*, but rather ſeem beyond the reach "of *painting* †." Surely the deſcription of the ſwan, above recited, might be copied on the canvas, by any artiſt of tolerable genius. As Milton derived his knowledge of this

* Paradiſe Loſt, book VII. line 438.

† Hiſtoire des l'Arts chez les Anciens.

beautiful

beautiful bird from actual obſervation, he has not fallen into the error of the ancient poets, who have, almoſt univerſally, aſcribed to it a muſical voice. Callimachus terms it "Apollo's tuneful ſongſter;" and Horace compliments Pindar with the epithet "*Dircæan ſwan**." Such improprieties clearly evince the importance of natural knowledge to the poet.

The polity of ROOKS is almoſt conſtituted with as much order and wiſdom, as that of ants, bees, and beavers; and their attachment to places contiguous to the dwellings of men, not only affords us frequent opportunities of obſerving them, but intereſts us, at the ſame time, in their well-being and preſervation. Theſe birds, therefore, furniſh the poet with various topics, for the

* *Multa Dircæum levat aura Cycnum*
Tendit Antoni, quoties in altos
Nubium tractus. Ode II. lib. IV.

In the addreſs to Melpomene, he ſays,

O mutis quoque piſcibus
Donatura Cycni, ſi libeat, ſonum. Ode III.

diſplay

diſplay of his art; and the following incident, by a little colouring, might be wrought into a pathetic picture. A large colony of rooks had ſubſiſted, many years, in a grove, on the banks of the river Irwell, near Mancheſter. One ſerene evening, I placed myſelf within the view of it, and marked, with attention, the various labours, paſtimes, and evolutions of this crowded ſociety. The idle members amuſed themſelves with chacing each other, through endleſs mazes; and, in their flight, they made the air reſound with an infinitude of diſcordant noiſes. In the midſt of theſe playful exertions, it unfortunately happened, that one rook, by a ſudden turn, ſtruck his beak againſt the wing of another. The ſufferer inſtantly fell into the river. A general cry of diſtreſs enſued. The birds hovered, with every expreſſion of anxiety, over their diſtreſſed companion. Animated by their ſympathy, and perhaps by the language of counſel, known to themſelves, he ſprung into the air, and by one ſtrong effort, reached the point of a rock, which projected

projected into the water. The exultation became loud and univerſal; but, alas! it was ſoon changed into notes of lamentation. For the poor wounded bird, in attempting to fly towards his neſt, dropt again into the river, and was drowned, amidſt the moans of his whole fraternity.

The habitudes of the domeſtic breed of POULTRY cannot, poſſibly, eſcape obſervation: And every one muſt have noticed the fierce jealouſy of the cock,

> Whoſe breaſt with ardour flames, as on he walks,
> Graceful, and crows defiance*.

It ſhould ſeem that this jealouſy is not confined to his rivals, but may ſometimes extend to his beloved female: And that he is capable of being actuated by revenge, founded on ſome degree of reaſoning, concerning her conjugal infidelity. An incident, which lately happened, at the ſeat of Mr. B******, near Berwick, juſtifies this remark. "My mowers," ſays he, "cut a

* Thomſon's Spring, line 772.

"partridge

" partridge on her neſt, and immediately
" brought the eggs (fourteen) to the houſe.
" I ordered them to be put under a very
" large beautiful hen, and her own to be
" taken away. They were hatched in two
" days, and the hen brought them up per-
" fectly well till they were five or ſix weeks
" old. During that time they were con-
" ſtantly kept confined in an outhouſe,
" without having been ſeen by any of the
" other poultry. The door happened to be
" left open, and the cock got in. My
" houſe-keeper, hearing her hen in diſtreſs,
" ran to her aſſiſtance, but did not arrive
" in time to ſave her life. The cock find-
" ing her with the brood of partridges, fell
" upon her with the utmoſt fury, and put
" her to death. The houſe-keeper found
" him tearing her both with his beak and
" ſpurs, although ſhe was then fluttering in
" the laſt agony, and incapable of any re-
" ſiſtance. The hen had been, formerly,
" the cock's greateſt favourite."

A writer, of no inconſiderable merit*, has employed his muſe, on a ſubject highly intereſting to the Engliſh reader, in a didactic poem entitled the *Fleece*. In this work, whatever relates to the management of *ſheep*, and the manufacture of wool, is largely diſcuſſed; and the whole is adorned by the introduction of rural imagery, and amuſing digreſſions. But the performance might have been rendered much more entertaining, if it had comprehended a fuller account of the natural hiſtory of the ſheep; and had diſplayed a nicer attention to the peculiar and pleaſing character of that innocent animal, and of her ſportive offſpring. One fact ſhould not have been omitted, in ſuch a narrative: And I wonder it eſcaped Mr. Dyer's obſervation. I am informed, that, after the dam has been ſhorn, and turned into the fold to her lambs, they become eſtranged to her; and that a ſcene of reciprocal diſtreſs enſues, which a man, of lively imagination, and tender feelings, might render highly intereſting and

* Mr. Dyer.

pathetic.

pathetic. The poor ſheep, when undergoing the operation of waſhing, and alſo when ſtripped of her warm and graceful covering is, in both circumſtances, a ſpectacle of pity, and a proper object of poetical amplification. Had Mr. Sterne been the author of the Fleece, he would perhaps have introduced the following little epiſode. "Dear "Senſibility! thou ſometimes inſpireſt the "rough peaſant, who traverſes the bleakeſt "mountains.—He finds the lacerated lamb "of another's flock. This moment I be-"held him, leaning his head againſt his "crook, with piteous inclination looking "down upon it.—Oh! had I come one "moment ſooner!—It bleeds to death. "—His gentle heart bleeds with it.—Peace "to thee, generous ſwain; I ſee thou walkeſt "off with anguiſh; but thy joys ſhall balance "it. For happy is thy cottage;—and "happy is the ſharer of it;—and happy are "the lambs, which ſport about thee!"

Smoke, iſſuing from the chimney of a retired cottage, ſhaded with trees, is a pleaſing

object. The waving line of beauty, in which it gradually aſcends, and the ſucceſſion of graceful forms, which it aſſumes, before it is loſt in the atmoſphere, adapts it to poetical deſcription or compariſon, as well as to the canvas of the painter. Mr. Dyer, in the poem above referred to, has thus repreſented its appearance, and aſſociated with it ideas of comfort and plenty, which tend to heighten the complacency of the beholder.

> Yet your mild homeſteads, ever blooming, ſmile
> Among embracing woods, and waft on high
> The breath of plenty, from the ruddy tops
> Of chimneys, curling o'er the gloomy trees,
> In airy, azure ringlets, to the ſky*.

The FLOATING MISTS, which are ſeen on the tops and ſides of hills, often put on a variety of agreeable ſhapes and colours. They conſtitute an intereſting part of the ſcenery of Oſſian's poems; and are introduced, with peculiar propriety, as objects which, in a mountainous country, were con-

* Dyer's Fleece, book I. line 509.

tinually

tinually within the view of his *dramatis perſonæ*. "The miſt of Cromla curls upon "the rock, and ſhines to the beam of the "weſt. The ſoft miſt pours over the ſilent "vale. The green flowers are filled with "dew. The ſun returns in his ſtrength; "and the miſt is gone." Theſe beautiful forms ſuggeſt, to a devout mind, converſant with the writings of Milton, part of Adam's morning invocation.

> Ye miſts and exhalations, that now riſe
> From hill or ſteaming lake, duſky or grey,
> Till the ſun paint your fleecy ſkirts with gold,
> In honour to the world's great Author riſe,
> Whether to deck with clouds th' uncoloured ſky,
> Or wet the thirſty earth with falling ſhowers,
> Riſing or falling, ſtill advance his praiſe*.

The expreſſion *ſteaming lake*, in the ſecond line, is uſed with the ſtricteſt philoſophical truth. Thomſon has applied the ſame epithet, with equal juſtneſs, to that inteſtine motion in the earth, by which Divine Providence

* Milton, book V.

Works in the ſecret deep, ſhoots *ſteaming* thence
The fair profuſion, that o'erſpreads the ſpring.

For it appears, from ſome late experiments, that ſixteen hundred gallons of water riſe, by evaporation, from an acre of ground, within the ſpace of twelve hours, of a ſummer's day*.

An inattentive obſerver of nature would hardly remark the CURVILINEAR DIRECTION, in the motion of animals. Yet certain it is, that neither birds, fiſhes, inſects, quadrupeds, nor men, ever move long in a ſtraight line. The final cauſe of this ſeems to be, that eaſe may be alternately given to the muſcles, on the right and on the left ſide of the body. When the muſcles of the right ſide are in a ſtate of vigorous exertion, the direction of the body will incline that way; and when they require relief, thoſe of the left ſide come into action, and produce an oppoſite effect. Whoever follows a draught horſe heavily laden, will perceive

* Watſon's Chemical Eſſays, Vol. III. p. 52.

the

the truth of this obſervation. And it is not more apparent on the beaten highway, than in the ſheep-tracks on the heath, and in the paths, worn by the paſſage of cattle to their watering places. Hence it is a rule, in the art of gardening, that walks and pleaſure grounds ſhould be ſerpentine; as that form is moſt agreeable to nature, and therefore moſt conſonant to an elegant and improved taſte.

Milton makes frequent mention of the FLAMING SWORDS, borne by the angelic ſpirits, and particularly by the cherubim, who were ſtationed at the gate of Paradiſe.

> And on the eaſt ſide of the garden, place,
> Where entrance up from Eden eaſieſt climbs,
> Cherubic watch; and of a ſword, the flame
> Wide waving, all approach far off to fright,
> And guard all paſſage to the tree of life*.

If the Poet had been acquainted with the modern diſcoveries in electricity, he might perhaps have ſeized this occaſion of

* Paradiſe Loſt, book XI. line 120.

exerting his ſuperior talents for deſcription, by a more minute and pictorial diſplay of *the ſword of flame wide waving*. The reader, at leaſt, may aſſiſt his imagination to conceive a more lively idea of it, by the following beautiful experiment.

Make a torricellian *vacuum*, in a glaſs tube, about three feet long, and ſeal it hermetically. Let one end of this tube be held in the hand, and the other applied to the electrical conductor; and immediately the whole tube will be illuminated, and when taken from the conductor, will continue luminous for a conſiderable time. If it be then drawn through the hand, the light will be uncommonly intenſe, from end to end, without the leaſt interruption. After this operation, which diſcharges it in a great meaſure, it will ſtill flaſh at intervals, though held only at one extremity, and quite ſtill. But if it be graſped by the other hand, at the ſame time, in a different place, ſtrong flaſhes of light will dart from one extremity to the other, and continue to do ſo twenty-

four

four hours, or perhaps longer, without freſh excitation*.

The foregoing experiment was made by Mr. Canton, to elucidate the nature of the Aurora Borealis, a phenomenon well ſuited to exerciſe the fancy of the poet. But ſtill more congenial to him are thoſe illuſive meteors, which ſometimes occur in northern climates; and which, literally, give "to airy "nothing a local habitation and a name." "I was never more ſurprized," ſays Crantz, in his Hiſtory of Greenland, "than on a "fine warm ſummer's day, to perceive "the iſlands, that lie four leagues weſt of "our ſhore, putting on a form quite differ- "ent from what they are known to have. "As I ſtood gazing upon them, they ap- "peared at firſt infinitely greater than what "they naturally are; and ſeemed as if I "viewed them through a large magnifying "glaſs. They were thus not only made "larger, but brought nearer to me: I

* See Dr. Prieſtley's Hiſt. of Electricity, p. 540.

"plainly

"plainly deſcried every ſtone upon the "land, and all the furrows filled with ice. "When this deception had laſted for a "while, the proſpect ſeemed to break up, "and a new ſcene of wonder to preſent "itſelf. The iſlands ſeemed to travel to "the ſhore, and repreſented a wood, or a "tall cut hedge. The ſcene then ſhifted, "and ſhewed the appearance of all ſorts of "curious figures; as ſhips with ſails, "ſtreamers, and flags, antique elevated "caſtles with decayed turrets; and a thou-"ſand forms, for which fancy found a re-"ſemblance in nature. When the eye had "been ſatisfied with gazing, the whole "group ſeemed to riſe in air, and at length "vaniſh into nothing. At ſuch times, the "air is quite ſerene and clear; but compreſt "with ſubtile vapours; and theſe, appearing "between the eye and the object, give it all "that variety of appearances, which glaſſes, "of different refrangibilities, would have "done*."

* See Goldſmith's Hiſtory of the Earth, vol. I.

Thomſon,

Thomſon, in his Caſtle of Indolence, refers to appearances ſomewhat ſimilar, in the weſtern iſles of Scotland.

As when a ſhepherd of the Hebrid iſles,
Plac'd far amid the melancholy main,
(Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles,
Or that aërial beings ſometimes deign,
To ſtand unbodied to our ſenſes plain)
Sees on the naked hill or valley low,
The whilſt in ocean Phœbus dips his wain,
A vaſt aſſembly moving to and fro,
Then all at once in air diſſolves the wondrous ſhow.

However marvellous ſuch narratives may appear to a phlegmatic reader, they will not ſeem incredible to the poet; whoſe fancy can form a ſtill brighter, and more gay creation, without the aid of aërial refractions or reflections. And if theſe fictions deviate not too far from veriſimilitude, they agreeably agitate the mind with the mixed emotions of ſurprize and delight. But in delineations of nature, they have no legitimate place; and the judgment rejects, with diſguſt, whatever falſifies the truth of deſcription, by its obvious incongruity. Myrtle groves,

groves, perennial ſprings, unfading flowers, and odoriferous gales, the hackneyed Arcadian ſcenery, accord not with an Engliſh landſcape. And equally unſuitable to our climate, and to the views of this country, are the ſpicy beauties, and pearly treaſures of the Eaſt. Yet Milton, in his Comus, thus addreſſes the goddeſs of the Severn;

> May thy billows roll aſhore,
> The beryl, and the golden ore!
> May thy lofty head be crown'd
> With many a tower, and terrace round;
> And here and there, thy banks upon,
> With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

But the poet is not, upon all occaſions, to be confined within the preciſe boundaries of truth. What writer, of lively fancy, in deſcribing a morning walk on the banks of Keſwick, would not embelliſh the beauty of the ſcene by the MELODY of BIRDS; and thus add the charms of muſic to all the enchantments of viſion? Yet, I believe, there is not a feathered ſongſter to be found in thoſe delightful vales; probably, owing to the terror inſpired by the birds of prey, which

which abound on the mountains that ſurround them. The ſame obſervation will perhaps juſtify the author of the DESERTED VILLAGE, when he attempts to magnify the horrors of an American wilderneſs, by introducing the tiger into the tremendous group; though this animal has never yet been found in the Britiſh trans-atlantic ſettlements.

Thoſe pois'nous fields, with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark ſcorpion gathers death around;
Where, at each ſtep, the ſtranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful ſnake;
Where *crouching tygers* wait their hapleſs prey,
And ſavage men, more murd'rous ſtill than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravag'd landſcape with the ſkies.

I cannot cloſe this Eſſay, without making an apology for the freedom of my ſtrictures on poetical demerit. And I feel a peculiar diffidence with reſpect to the animadverſions on a poet, who is juſtly the boaſt and glory of Britain. To pluck a leaf from the brow of Milton, may be deemed a ſacrilegious attempt

attempt to injure the laurels of our country. Should it not, however, be recollected, that error is moſt dangerous, when dignified by high example; and that it is no diſparagement to genius, however exalted, to aſcribe to it, ſome portion of that imperfection, which is the common allotment of humanity?

ON

ON THE

INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL CONDUCT

OF

EXPERIMENTAL PURSUITS*.

HOMO, NATURÆ MINISTER ET INTERPRES, TANTUM FACIT ET INTELLIGIT, QUANTUM DE NATURÆ ORDINE, RE VEL MENTE, OBSERVAVERIT; NEC AMPLIUS SCIT, AUT POTEST.

BACON, NOV. ORGAN. APH. I.

ON THE

INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL CONDUCT

OF

EXPERIMENTAL PURSUITS*.

THE very learned and ingenious author of Hermes† has ſtigmatized the purſuits of modern philoſophy, by treating them as mere *experimental amuſements*; and charging thoſe who are engaged in ſuch purſuits, with deeming nothing *demonſtration*, that is not made *ocular*. Thus, inſtead of aſcending from *ſenſe* to *intellect*, the natural progreſs of all true learning, he obſerves, that the

* Read before the Literary and Philoſophical Society of Mancheſter, and inſerted in the ſecond volume of their Memoirs.

† See a Philoſophical Inquiry concerning univerſal Grammar, by James Harris, Eſq. p. 361.

philoſopher hurries into the midſt of ſenſe, where he wanders at random, loſt in a labyrinth of *infinite particulars*. It would be eaſy to retaliate on this celebrated writer, by pointing out the futility of the ſyllogiſtic mode of philoſophizing, inſtituted by his favourite Ariſtotle. I might alſo oppoſe to his authority, that of lord Verulam, the brighteſt luminary of ſcience, who objects, in the ſtrongeſt terms, againſt that reverence for ſpeculations, purely intellectual, "by "means whereof," as he expreſſes himſelf, "men have withdrawn too much from the "contemplations of nature, and the obſer-"vations of experience, and have tumbled "up and down in their own reaſon and "conceits. Upon theſe intellectualiſts, who "are notwithſtanding commonly taken for "the moſt ſublime and divine philoſophers, "Heraclitus gave a juſt cenſure, ſaying, *men "ſought truth in their own little worlds, and "not in the great and common world**."

* Bacon of the Advancement of Learning, book I. p 20. 4to.

But,

But, without depreciating metaphyſics, a ſcience which I have always ſtudied with delight, and which invigorates the faculties of the mind, and gives preciſion and accuracy to our rational inveſtigations, by inſtructing us in the nicer diſcriminations of truth and falſehood, no doubt ought to be entertained of the high importance and dignity of natural knowledge. To this we owe the neceſſaries, the conveniences, and all the gratifications of our being; and in the purſuit of it the underſtanding is exerciſed and improved, and the moral affections are elevated to ſuperior degrees of piety, towards our great and beneficent Creator. Nor is modern philoſophy liable to the charges, which have been thus contumeliouſly brought againſt it. For, I truſt, it has been conducted on the principles of genuine *logic*, by all its more diſtinguiſhed profeſſors, who have been ſedulouſly careful firſt to eſtabliſh ſound premiſes, and then to deduce juſt concluſions.

The immortal Newton, from an appearance, which we daily obſerve, the fall of

bodies to the ground, aſcended by patient inveſtigation, and by a regular gradation of evidence, to the great law of gravity. And having aſcertained this general principle, he extended it over the univerſe, explaining by it not only the phænomena of our globe, but the revolutions of the whole planetary ſyſtem. By the ſucceſſive adoption of the ſame *analytic* and *ſynthetic* mode of reaſoning, he demonſtrated his beautiful theory of light and colours. Numberleſs other ſubſequent diſcoveries have been conducted on the ſame ſcientific plan, as might be evinced by references to the writings of our own and foreign philoſophers.

Even the chemiſts have long ſince deſerted their jargon and myſterious conceits; and they now carry on their reſearches in a perſpicuous and rational manner. That unknown principle, phlogiſton, to which they referred ſo many operations of nature, explaining, as the logicians expreſs it, *ignotum per ignotius*, has been lately ſhewn to be no creature of the imagination; and may be exhibited

exhibited to the ſenſes, under the form of inflammable air. Fire, ſubtle as it is in its activity, and univerſal in its energy, has been traced through all its modifications, meaſured by different ſtandards, and reduced to known, preciſe, and permanent laws. It is therefore no juſt complaint, that intelligent principles are neglected, and that empyriciſm in phyſics is honoured with excluſive encouragement. Yet, in the prevailing rage for experiments, it cannot be unſeaſonable to caution the young adventurer, not to deem the microſcope, the retort, or the air-pump unerring guides to truth; but to proſecute his reſearches into nature with a modeſt conviction of the fallacy of his ſenſes, and the limited powers of his underſtanding. "You will wonder," ſays Mr. Boyle, in the preface to his eſſays, "that I ſhould uſe ſo often *perhaps*; *it ſeems*; "*'tis not improbable*; words, which argue a "diffidence of the truth of the opinions I "incline to. But I have hitherto not un- "frequently found, that what pleaſed me for "a while, was ſoon after diſgraced by ſome "further or new experiment."

Mr. Bewley, an eminent chemiſt, not long ſince, informed me, that he concluded the preſence of the vitriolic acid to be unneceſſary to produce the ſpontaneous accenſion of Homberg's pyrophorus, and delivered this opinion to the public, on the evidence of at leaſt fifty different trials*. Yet, with materials taken from the ſame bottle, the experiment afterwards failed nearly as often, though the minuteſt circumſtances in the proceſs were as much alike, as attention could render them. Contrarieties, equally humiliating, have often occurred in my own philoſophical purſuits. But the moſt inſtructive leſſon of modeſty and reſerve, which I recollect in the courſe of my experience, is the one I ſhall now briefly recite,

The favourable influence of fixed air on vegetation I believed to have been aſcertained by more than a hundred experiments, which I made in the year 1775. Many of theſe experiments were repeated afterwards by Mr.

* See Prieſtley on Air, vol. III. Appendix, p. 395.

Henry,

Henry, Mr. Bew, and others. But Dr. Prieſtley, whoſe accuracy and fidelity are not leſs diſtinguiſhed than his learning and ingenuity, has ſince drawn concluſions from the proſecution of this ſubject, which militate totally with mine. I reſumed the inquiry, and engaged ſeveral of my friends in it. The reſult of all our trials was uniformly the ſame, viz. that fixed air, in a due proportion, is ſo favourable to vegetable growth, that it may juſtly be deemed a *pabulum* of plants. Dr. Prieſtley's ſubſequent experiments, however, were ſtill contradictory to mine: And in one of his very friendly letters to me, he thus expreſſes himſelf. "In all theſe caſes, you "will ſay, I choak the plants with too great "a quantity of *wholeſome* nouriſhment: "And to all yours I ſay, you do not give "them enough of the *noxious matter* to kill "them. Thus the amicable controverſy "muſt reſt between us; and like all other "combatants, we ſhall both ſing TE DEUM." But I felt little diſpoſition to exultation on ſuch an occaſion, and dropt the ſubject,

conſcious that though nature is always the ſame, we often view her under fallacious appearances. Time, however, and the reſearches of foreign philoſophers have thrown new lights on this diſputed point. And I am informed, by a letter from our common friend, Mr. Vaughan, that Dr. Prieſtley now admits the ſalubrity of fixed air to vegetable life. I ſhall copy the paragraph, which contains the account. "Dr. Prieſtley tells me of a very valuable book, written by a perſon at Geneva, on vegetation; particularly as to the influence of light, which he maintains to be a phlogiſticating proceſs, acting on the reſinous parts of plants only. He alſo affirms, to the ſatisfaction of Dr. Prieſtley, that not only phlogiſton is the grand pabulum of plants, but that its predominant form of reception is that of fixed air; which in a proper degree and place of application, he ſhews to be ſalutary to all plants whatever."

Differences in the reſults of our inquiries, or in thoſe of others, whilſt they incite attention,

tention, and guard us againſt confidence and preſumption, ſhould neither diminiſh the veneration due to philoſophy, nor repreſs our temperate ardour in the purſuit of truth. We ſhould recollect that though the operations of nature are ſimple, uniform, and regular, they are only diſcovered to be ſuch, when fully unfolded to our underſtandings: And that, when we endeavour to trace her laws, by artificial arrangements, combinations, or decompoſitions, which is all that *experiment* can accompliſh *, ſucceſs may be ſometimes fruſtrated by circumſtances ſo minute, as to elude the moſt ſagacious obſervation. From the hiſtory of electricity it appears, that the gentlemen, firſt engaged in the culture of that ſcience, aſcribed oppoſite effects to the uſe of boiling water in the Leyden phial. M. Jalabert, of Geneva, and others invariably found, that the electric powers of the bottle were increaſed by

* Ad opera nil aliud poteſt Homo, quam ut corpora naturalia admoveat, et amoveat; reliqua natura ipſa intus tranſigit. Bacon, Nov. Organ.

the

the water; whereas Meſſrs. Kinnerſly, Nollet, and Watſon experienced the reverſe, in all their trials. It has ſince been ſhewn that the jarring deciſions of thoſe learned men, were owing to the difference in the action of boiling water on the ſeveral kinds of glaſs employed. Contradictory opinions are now held, by two very celebrated chemiſts, concerning the nature of ſteel; one aſſerting that its phlogiſton is augmented, the other that it is diminiſhed, in the proceſs by which it is made. Both appeal to experiment in ſupport of their opinions; and as the point in diſpute is of importance to the arts, it merits a more complete and ſatisfactory inveſtigation.

To theſe examples I ſhall add another, in which I have myſelf been particularly intereſted. The Rev. Dr. Hales, whoſe experimental inquiries were generally directed to the good of his fellow-creatures, diſcovered a lithontriptic power, in certain fermenting mixtures. But he acknowledges the impracticability of injecting ſuch mixtuers

mixtures into the bladder, with ſufficient frequency, to diſſolve the ſtone; and recites his experiments chiefly with a view to engage others in the ſame laudable and important purſuit. The ſubject however ſunk into oblivion, and no further attempts of this kind were made, till the notice of the public was again excited towards the properties and uſes of factitious air, by the writings of various learned and ingenious men. At this time (1774) Dr. Saunders, a phyſician in London, eminent for his knowledge of chemiſtry, renewed the experiments which Dr. Hales had begun, and found that the ſolvent power, aſcribed to the fermenting mixtures, reſided only in the fixed air: Hearing ſome very imperfect accounts of this diſcovery, curioſity and humanity engaged me in the purſuit of it. I recollected that Dr. Black and Mr. Cavendiſh had proved the ſolubility of various earthy bodies in water, either by abſtracting from, or ſuperadding to the fixed air, which they contain. And as the human calculus is diſſolved in the former way,

way, by lime water and the cauſtic alkali, it appeared to me highly probable, that the effect would be produced, in the ſame ſubſtance, by the latter mode of operation. Analogy ſeemed favourable to the hypotheſis, and a ſeries of experiments, which I made with great care, in the fulleſt manner confirmed it. Two years afterwards, Dr. Falconer engaged in the ſame inquiry; and the reſults of his trials exactly coincide with thoſe which I have related. This united evidence has been alſo ſtrengthened by the ſubſequent teſtimony of Dr. Prieſtley and Dr. Hulme. Yet deciſive as it appears to be, a friend of mine, who is a very able and accurate experimenter, aſſures me, that the *calculi*, which he has tried, uniformly reſiſt the action of mephitic water. And he further adds, that not one of them has been found to contain a ſingle grain of abſorbent earth; but that all of them proved inflammable, like gall-ſtones. Dr. Heberden has, alſo, favoured me with ſimilar information reſpecting their analyſis. On the other hand, I have ſhewn, that

theſe

theſe ſubſtances vary in their ſtructure and compoſition; that calcination converts ſome into quicklime; that others are conſumed entirely in the fire; and that a third ſort yield, after burning, an inſipid reſiduum, incapable of giving any impregnation to water*. What then are we to infer from premiſes, apparently ſo inconſiſtent? Let us deduce from them theſe ſalutary leſſons; that dogmatiſm is unbecoming a philoſopher; that fallacy may attend our cleareſt views; and that unperceived diverſities, in the ſubjects of our inveſtigation, may render truth compatible with contrariety of evidence.

An eagerneſs to eſtabliſh ſyſtems, and a faſtidious diſdain of perplexity, contradiction, or diſappointment, are diſpoſitions highly unfavourable to phyſical inveſtigation. Lord Bacon has well obſerved, "that one, who "begins with certainties, ſhall end in doubts; "but if he will be content to begin with

* Philoſoph. Medic. and Experim. Eſſays.

"doubts,

"doubts, he ſhall end in certainties*." The progreſs of ſcience is uſually ſlow and gradual; and in all ordinary caſes, the *race is not to the ſwift*, but to the ſteady, the patient, and the perſevering. A man of lively parts, and fertile imagination generally engages in philoſophical reſearches, with too much impetuoſity; and if he be fortunate in the attainment of a few leading facts, he ſupplies all remaining deficiencies by conjecture and hypotheſis. But ſhould his career be obſtructed by contradictory phænomena, he quits the ſtudy of nature with diſguſt; and concludes that all is uncertainty, becauſe he has had the mortification to find himſelf miſtaken. A ſcepticiſm like this, founded in pride and indolence, is equally ſubverſive both of ſpeculation and of action. We can apply to no branch of human learning, which is ſecure from illuſion, or exempt from controverſy; nor engage in any plan of life with undeviating judgment, and uninterrupted ſucceſs. So true is the ſentiment of the Roman poet,

* Advancement of Learning, book I. p. 20.

Nunquam

Nunquam quiſquam ita bene ſubducta ratione ad vitam fuit,
Quin res, ætas, uſus, ſemper aliquid apportet novi;
Aliquid admoneat: ut illa, quæ te ſcire credas, neſcias,
Et quæ tibi putaris prima in experiundo repudies.

TERENT.

But as diſappointments in life often furniſh the beſt leſſons of wiſdom, ſo thoſe in philoſophy may, frequently, be applied to the promotion of ſcience. In experimental purſuits, which are not undertaken at random, but with conſiſtent and rational views, we neceſſarily form a preconception of the induction to be eſtabliſhed. If the trials ſucceed, in which we are engaged, our end is obtained, and, for the moſt part, we reſt ſatisfied. But if the proofs fail, ſome unexpected phænomena often occur, which awaken our attention, ſuggeſt new analogies, and excite us, perhaps, to the inveſtigation of other propoſitions of more importance than the antecedent ones. The very intereſting and comprehenſive diſcoveries of Dr. Black, concerning the nature of calcareous earths, and alkaline ſalts, in their different ſtates of mildneſs and cauſticity, originated

originated from an incident of this kind*. And many ſimilar examples might be adduced from the records of philoſophy. But whether ſuch be the fortunate event or not, a negative truth may be of as much value as a poſitive one; and conſequently, ſucceſs or diſappointment may prove equally uſeful in experimental reſearches†.

To deduce the general characters of a body from one ſingle property of it, individually conſidered, ſeems contrary to the rules of philoſophizing. And the young experimenter ſhould be cautious both of admitting, and of forming ſuch analogies. Yet they are ſometimes ſo ſtrong as to force conviction even againſt the evidence of ſenſe, and of general opinion. The diamond was held by chemiſts, in the time of Sir Iſaac Newton, to be apyrous, and could not be ſuſpected, from any of its known qualities, to be of an inflammable

* See Eſſays Phyſical and Literary.

† See the Author's Philoſophical, Medical, and Experimental Eſſays, vol. I. fourth edit.

nature.

nature. Yet this vigilant philoſopher did not heſitate to conſider it as an *unctuous coagulum*, ſolely from its poſſeſſing a very high degree of refractive power on the rays of light. For this power he found to depend chiefly, if not wholly, on the ſulphureous parts of which bodies are compoſed. Late experiments have confirmed this opinion; and fully proved that diamonds conſiſt almoſt entirely of pure phlogiſton, ſince they are capable of being volatilized by heat in cloſe veſſels, of pervading the moſt ſolid porcelain crucibles, and of being converted into actual flame.

The accuracy of this inference is a ſtriking proof of the importance of judicious and comprehenſive analogies; and of the advantages reſulting from the mode of reaſoning by induction. For, to uſe the words of Sir Iſaac Newton, "though the arguing "from experiments and obſervations, by "induction, is no *demonſtration* of general "concluſions, yet it is the beſt way of ar-"guing, which the nature of things admits

"of; and may be looked upon as ſo much "the ſtronger, by how much the induc-"tion is more general." This improved ſpecies of logic was firſt recommended and introduced into phyſics, by lord Verulam; who, at a very early period of life, ſaw the futility of Ariſtotle's ſyllogyſtic ſyſtem, which proceeding on the ſuperficial enumeration of a few particulars, riſes at once to the eſtabliſhment of univerſal propoſitions. *Duæ viæ ſunt, atque eſſe poſſunt, ad inquirendam et inveniendam veritatem. Altera a ſenſu et particularibus advolat ad axiomata maxime generalia, atque ex iis principiis, eorumque immota veritate judicat et invenit axiomata media; atque hæc via in uſu eſt. Altera à ſenſu et particularibus excitat axiomata, aſcendendo continenter et gradatim, ut ultimo loco perveniatur ad maximè generalia; quæ via vera eſt, ſed intentata**.

It is obvious that the force of this inductive method of reaſoning muſt depend

* Bacon. Nov. Organ. lib. I. Aphor. 19.

on

on the advancement, which has been made, in the different branches of phyſics. Indeed, it preſuppoſes a ſtore of particular facts, gradually accumulated, but ſufficiently ample, and fit for reduction into their proper claſſes. Time and obſervation will be continually diminiſhing the number, and conſequently enlarging the boundaries of theſe claſſes, by diſcovering other relations between them, and pointing out the connection of phænomena, deemed, at firſt, diſtinct and independent. But it muſt be remembered that every acceſſion to knowledge renews the doubts and difficulties, that reſult from ignorance; becauſe it preſents freſh objects to our inveſtigation, and further *deſiderata* to our wiſhes. It is this endleſs progreſſion of ſcience, which, by gratifying curioſity with perpetual novelty, and animating ambition with proſpects of higher and higher attainments, ſometimes gives the attachment to it an undue aſcendency over every other principle of the mind. But having expatiated in another

Eſſay*, on the folly of ſuch extravagant ardour in the purſuits of knowledge, I ſhall now cloſe theſe reflections with the following lines from Milton.

- - - Apt the mind, or fancy, is to rove
Unchecked, and of her roving is no end;
'Till warn'd, or by experience taught, ſhe learn,
That not to know at large of things remote
From uſe, obſcure and ſubtle, but to know
That which before us lies, in daily life,
Is the prime wiſdom; what is more is fume,
Or emptineſs, or fond impertinence,
And renders us in things that moſt concern,
Unpractis'd, unprepared, and ſtill to ſeek.

Par. Loſt. book VIII.

* On Inconſiſtency of Expectation in Literary Purſuits.

A TRIBUTE

A

TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF

CHARLES DE POLIER, Esq;

ADDRESSED TO THE

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
OF MANCHESTER.

OCTOBER 30, 1782.

AT a meeting of the LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY *of* MANCHESTER, *the following reſolution paſſed unanimouſly.*

"*The Members of the* LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY *lamenting, with heartfelt concern, the death of their late much honoured brother,* CHARLES DE POLIER, *Eſq; unanimouſly reſolve, that* DR. PERCIVAL *be requeſted to draw up a grateful and reſpectful Tribute to his Memory; to be inſerted in the journals of the Society, with a view to record his diſtinguiſhed merit, and to prolong the influence of his bright example.*"

NOVEMBER 13, 1782.

At a meeting of the LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, *it was reſolved unanimouſly,* "*That the Thanks of the Society be returned to* DR. PERCIVAL, *for his Tribute to the Memory of* CHARLES DE POLIER, *Eſq; and that he be deſired to print the ſame.*"

A

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY

OF

CHARLES DE POLIER, Esq;

ADDRESSED TO THE

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

OF MANCHESTER.

THE contemplation of moral and intellectual excellence affords the moſt pleaſing and inſtructive exerciſe, to a well-conſtituted mind. By exalting our ideas of the human character, it expands and heightens the principle of benevolence; and at the ſame time is favourable to piety, by raiſing our views to the ſupreme Author of all that is fair and good in man. The wiſe and the virtuous have ever dwelt, with

delight, on the meritorious talents and diſpoſitions of their fellow-creatures: and an amiable philoſopher drew, from this ſource, ſuch ſweet conſolations, under the toils and diſtreſſes of life, that he warmly recommends the practice to our imitation. "*When you would recreate yourſelf,*" ſays M. Antoninus, "*reflect on the laudable qua-*"*lities of your acquaintance: On the magna-*"*nimity of one, the modeſty of another, or the*"*liberality of a third**." Generous meditation! which every one, preſent, may indulge; and, by indulging, aſſimilate, to his own nature, the various perfections of others; transfuſing, as it were, into his breaſt, the virtues which he contemplates.

Can we engage ourſelves in ſuch an exerciſe, without the moſt lively recollection of our late honoured and beloved colleague? His image preſents itſelf before us; and we inſtantly recogniſe the agreeableneſs of his form, the animation of his coun-

* M. Antonin. lib. VI.

tenance,

tenance, the vigour of his underſtanding, and the goodneſs of his heart. How graceful was his addreſs; how ſprightly, entertaining, and intelligent his converſation! What rich ſtores of knowledge did he diſplay; what facility in the uſe, what judgment in the application of them! Few have been the ſubjects of diſcuſſion in this Society, which his obſervations have not enlightened: And what he could not himſelf elucidate, he has enabled others to do, by the pertinency of his queries, and the ſagacity of his conjectures. So quick was his penetration; ſo enlarged his comprehenſion; ſo exact the arrangement of his intellectual treaſures! Learning, with ſome, is the parent of mental obſcurity; and the multiplicity of ideas, which have been acquired by ſevere ſtudy, ſerve only to produce perplexity and confuſion. But Mr. de Polier's thoughts were always ready at command. And he engaged, with perſpicuity, on every topic of diſcourſe; becauſe he ſaw, at one view, all its relations and analogies to

thoſe

thoſe branches of knowledge, with which he was already acquainted. With ſuch felicity of genius, he was continually making large acceſſions to his ſtock of ſcience, without laborious reſearches, or ſecluſion from the ſocial enjoyments of life.

Of his abilities as a writer, he furniſhed us with a ſtriking proof, in the Diſſertation he delivered, laſt winter*; which is equally diſtinguiſhed by the juſtneſs of its ſentiments, and the purity of its diction; and fully diſplays his perfect attainment, both of the idiom and embelliſhments of the Engliſh language.

But Mr. de Polier had merits, more eſtimable than thoſe, which he derived from the vivacity of his fancy, the elegance of his taſte, or the powers of his underſtanding. And his friends will cordially unite with me in teſtifying, that, if honoured for his *intel-*

* On the pleaſure which the mind receives, from the *exerciſe* of its faculties, and particularly that of *taſte*.

lectual,

lectual, he was beloved for his *moral* endowments. His heart was open to every generous ſympathy; and the ſenſibility of his nature ſo enlivened all his perceptions, that the ordinary duties of ſocial intercourſe were performed, by him, with a warmth, almoſt equal to that of friendſhip. Nor was this the artificial deportment of unmeaning courteſy; but the generous effuſion of a heart, which felt for all mankind. In ſuch *philanthrophy*, politeneſs has its true foundation: And of this joint grace of nature and education, "which aids and "ſtrengthens Virtue where it meets her, "and imitates her actions, where ſhe is "not," our lamented brother was a bright example. So engaging were his manners, and at the ſame time ſo ſincere his diſpoſition, that we may apply to him, with *honour*, what Cicero meant as a *reproach*; that he was qualified, *cum triſtibus ſevére, cum remiſſis jucunde, cum ſenibus graviter, cum juventute comiter vivere.* Theſe powers of pleaſing flowed from no ſervile compliances, nor ever led him into criminal indulgences.

As

As a companion, he was convivial without intemperance, and gay without levity or licentiouſneſs. His converſation was ſprightly and unreſerved; but, in the moſt unguarded hours of mirth, exempt from all indecency and profaneneſs. And the ſallies of his wit and pleaſantry were ſo ſeaſoned with good humour, that they gave delight, unmixed with pain, even to thoſe who were the objects of them. If the coarſer pleaſures of the bottle be baniſhed from our tables; or if rational converſation, and delicacy of behaviour, with the ſweet ſociety of the ſofter ſex, be now ſubſtituted in their room, this happy revolution has been rendered more complete by the influenc of Mr. de Polier.

Yet though URBANITY, according to the moſt liberal interpretation of that term, was the *characteriſtic* of our excellent colleague, he poſſeſſed other endowments, of more intrinſic value. And I could enlarge, with pleaſure, on his nice ſenſe of rectitude, his inviolable integrity, and ſacred

cred regard to truth. Theſe moral virtues were, in him, founded on no fictitious principle of *honour*, but reſulted from the conſtitution of his mind; and were ſtrengthened by habit, regulated by reaſon, and ſanctioned by religion. For, notwithſtanding, the veil which he choſe to caſt over his *piety*, it was manifeſt to his intimate friends; and may be recollected by others, who have marked the ſerioufneſs, with which he diſcourſed, on every ſubject relative to the being and attributes of GOD. Defective indeed muſt be the character of that man, who can diſcern and acknowledge, without venerating the divine perfections; and partake of the bounties of nature, yet feel no emotions of gratitude towards its benevolent Author. *A little philoſophy*, ſays lord Verulam, *may incline the mind to atheiſm; but depth in philoſophy will bring it about again to religion**.

I have

* The noble author ſubjoins a juſt reaſon, for this obſervation. "For while the mind of man," ſays he, "looketh "upon *ſecond cauſes* ſcattered, it may ſometimes reſt in them, "and

I have thus attempted to draw a rude ſketch of the features, of our late honoured friend. A fuller delineation might furniſh a more pleaſing picture to ſtrangers; but, to the members of this ſociety, a few outlines will ſuffice to revive the image of the beloved original. This image, I truſt, will be long and forcibly impreſſed on our minds; and that every one, here preſent, may adopt the language of Tacitus, on a ſimilar occaſion. "*Quicquid ex Agricola* "*amavimus, quicquid mirati ſumus, manet,* "*manſurumque eſt in animis hominum.*" "Whatever in Agricola was the object "of our love and of our admiration, re- "mains, and will remain, in the hearts of "all who knew him."

Having taken a ſhort view of the character of Mr. de Polier, curioſity and attachment concur in prompting us, to extend the retroſpect; and we become

"and go no farther: But when it beholdeth the chain of them "linked together, it muſt needs fly to Providence and Deity."
BACON's Eſſay on Atheiſm.

ſolicitous

ſolicitous to know ſomething of his connections and education; and to trace the leading events of a life, in the concluſion of which we have been ſo deeply intereſted. But our friend was no egotiſt; and the zeal with which he entered into the concerns of others, precluded the detail of his own. I muſt content myſelf, therefore, with preſenting to the ſociety, the following brief memoirs.

Charles de Polier Bottens was the ſon of the Reverend —— de Polier Bottens, Dean of the Cathedral Church of Lauſanne, Preſident of the Synod of the Pais de Vaud, Member of the Society of Arts and Sciences at Manheim, and citizen of Geneva. He was born at Lauſanne, in the year 1753; and received the firſt part of his education, in the public ſchools of that city. As ſoon as he had acquired a ſufficient knowledge of the claſſics, he was ſent to an academy near Caſſel, in Germany; from whence, after a reſidence of two years, he was removed to the univerſity

ſity of Gottingen. In this celebrated ſeat of learning, he paſſed three years; and being then inclined to a military life, he obtained a lieutenant's commiſſion in the Swiſs regiment of D'Erlact, in the French ſervice. But he ſoon reſigned his commiſſion, and returned to Lauſanne; where he had a command given him, in one of the Provincial regiments of dragoons. In this ſituation, his connection commenced with the earl of Tyrone; who offered him the tuition of his eldeſt ſon, lord le Poer, on terms equally honourable and advantageous. But before the engagement was completed, propoſals were made to him by the duke of Saxe Gotha, to become governor to the hereditary prince, with an annuity, for life, of twelve hundred rixdollars; an apartment at court; and the poſt of chamberlain, or rank of colonel. Theſe propoſals, however, he declined in favour of lord Tyrone. And he executed the important truſt, aſſigned to him, with ſuch judgment, tenderneſs, and fidelity, as induced that reſpectable nobleman

nobleman to commit three of his children to his ſole direction. Theſe amiable youths he brought to England, in the ſummer of 1779; and ſettled them at the ſchool of a clergyman in Mancheſter, who is eminently diſtinguiſhed by his virtues and abilities.

At this period, our firſt acquaintance with Mr. de Polier was formed. By the laws of hoſpitality, he was entitled to our attention as a ſtranger. But his perſonal accompliſhments, and the charms of his converſation ſoon ſuperſeded the ordinary claims of cuſtom, and converted formal civility into eſteem and friendſhip. He became our companion in pleaſure; our aſſiſtant in ſtudy; our counſellor in difficulty; and our ſolace in diſtreſs. Amuſement acquired a dignity and zeſt, by his participation; and he ſoftened the auſterity of philoſophy, whenever he joined in the purſuit. The inſtitution, which now celebrates his memory, owes to him much of

its popularity and ſucceſs, and, ſo long as it ſubſiſts, his name will be revered, as one of its founders and moſt ſhining ornaments.

About the middle of laſt winter he was attacked by a complaint, which at firſt gave no diſturbance to the vital functions. But being aggravated by the fatigues of a long journey to Holyhead, and of a voyage from thence to Dublin, at a time when he laboured under the *Influenza*, the malady rapidly increaſed after his arrival in Ireland; and put a final period to his valuable life on the 18th of October 1782*. The vigour of his faculties, and the warmth of his affections, continued even to the hour of his diſſolution. And the amiableneſs of his behaviour, in the cloſing ſcene of trial and ſuffering through which he paſſed, gave ſuch completion to his character, that we may apply to him, what the poet has ſaid of Mr. Addiſon;

* At CURRAGHMORE, near WATERFORD, the ſeat of the Earl of Tyrone.

--- He

--- He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die*!

On this affecting event, I cannot expreſs your feelings and my own, in terms ſo forcible as thoſe of the animated hiſtorian, whom I have before quoted. *Si quis piorum manibus locus; ſi, ut ſapientibus placet, non cum corpore exſtinguuntur magnæ animæ; placide quieſcas, noſque ab infirmo deſiderio, ad contemplationem virtutum tuarum voces, quas neque lugeri, neque plangi fas eſt! Admiratione te potius temporalibus laudibus, et ſi natura ſuppeditet, ſimilitudine decoremus†!* "If there "be any habitation for the ſhades of the "virtuous; if, as philoſophers ſuppoſe, "exalted ſouls do not periſh with the body; "may you repoſe in peace, and recall us "from vain regret, to the contemplation of "your virtues, which allow no place for "mourning or complaint! Let us adorn "your memory, rather by a fixed admira-

* Tickell's Poem on the Death of Addiſon.

† Tacit. Vit. Agricolæ.

" tion, and, if our natures will permit, by
" an imitation of your excellent qualities,
" than by temporary eulogies *!"

* See Mr. Aikin's Tranſlation of the Life of Agricola.

AN

AN

APPENDIX;

CONTAINING

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS,

AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

AS the Socratic mode of diſcuſſion admits not of interruption by notes, the author has choſen to inſert, in this place, ſuch additional REMARKS *and* ILLUSTRATIONS, *concerning the ſubject matter of the diſcourſe on* TRUTH, *as further reading or reflection have ſuggeſted to his mind. He has alſo annexed a few ſupplementary notes, to the other* DISSERTATIONS.

SOCRATIC DISCOURSE.

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

I. TRUE AND FALSE HONOUR*.

THERE is a principle of HONOUR, which ſeems to be, in ſome meaſure, diſtinct from that of virtue; and originates from the aſſociation of certain ideas of propriety, or pride, with rectitude of conduct. Amongſt the ancient Greeks and Romans, Virtue and Honour were deified; and a joint altar was conſecrated to them at Rome. But afterwards each of them had ſeparate temples; ſo connected, however, that no one could enter the temple of honour, without paſſing through that of virtue.

The genuine principle of honour, in its full extent, may be defined, a quick perception and ſtrong feeling

* See p. 11.

of moral obligation, particularly with reſpect to probity and truth, in conjuction with an acute ſenſibility to ſhame, reproach, or infamy. But in different characters, theſe two conſtituent parts of the principle are found to exiſt in proportions ſo widely diverſified, as, ſometimes, to appear almoſt ſingle and detached. The former always *aids and ſtrengthens virtue*; the latter may, occaſionally, *imitate her actions**, when faſhion happily countenances, or high example prompts to rectitude. But being connected, for the moſt part, with a jealous pride, and capricious irritability, it will be more ſhocked with the *imputation*, than with the *commiſſion* of what is wrong. And thus it will conſtitute that ſpurious honour, which, by a perverſion of the laws of aſſociation, *puts evil for good, and good for evil*; and, under the ſanction of a name, perpetrates crimes without remorſe, and even without ignominy. To this empirical morality *duelling* owes its riſe, which, with fatal confidence, pretends to cure the indecorums of ſocial intercourſe, whilſt it deſtroys the lives of individuals, ſubverts the peace of families, and violates the moſt ſacred laws of the community. It is aſtoniſhing that a practice, which originated in the dark ages of ignorance, ſuperſtition, and diſorder, ſhould be continued in this enlightened period, though condemned

* Honour's a ſacred tie, the law of kings,
The noble mind's diſtinguiſhing perfection,
That aids and ſtrengthens Virtue where it meets her,
And imitates her actions where ſhe is not:
It ought not to be ſported with.

ADDISON's Cato.

by

by the polity of every ſtate, and utterly repugnant to the ſpirit, and precepts of Chriſtianity. The ancient Germans, Danes, and Franks were uſed to decide criminal queſtions of fact, in the laſt reſort, by combat. But this method of trial, about the cloſe of the fifth century, was reſtrained to the following conditions. 1. That the crime, for which it was inſtituted, ſhould be capital. 2. That it ſhould be certain, that the crime had been perpetrated. 3. That the accuſed, by common fame, ſhould be ſuppoſed guilty. 4. That the matter ſhould not be capable of proof by witneſſes. A cuſtom, thus regulated, appears wiſe and equitable, in compariſon with modern duelling, which has ſeldom any object, but the redreſs of fantaſtic wrongs, or the diſplay of reſentment, that often ſubſides before its execution. Is there a man of probity and humanity, and many of this character, I am perſuaded, have been ſeduced by the illuſions of falſe honour, who, if not prohibited by law, would think himſelf authorized to call forth his antagoniſt, place him as a mark, and appoint a ruffian to fire a piſtol at him, becauſe, in the heat of argument, or in the unguarded hours of convivial mirth, he has committed ſome trifling offence, or verbal incivility? And is it not adding the moſt egregious folly to injuſtice, to undertake himſelf this opprobrious office, at the hazard of his own life, and to the ruin, perhaps, of his deareſt connections? For, I preſume, it now forms no part of the creed of the duelliſt, that Divine Providence will interpoſe, on ſuch occaſions, to preſerve the injured, and to puniſh the aggreſſor.

The

The military ſpirit, which a long war has revived amongſt the inhabitants of this country, and which the armed aſſociations, eſtabliſhed in different places, cannot fail to foſter and ſupport, may, perhaps, contribute to multiply challenges, and to extend the practice of ſingle combat. Courage is ſo eſſential to the character of a ſoldier, that it becomes magnified in his eſtimation, far beyond its real deſert: And he is not only in danger of miſtaking its true nature, and proper object, but of acquiring a contempt for every virtue, which, in his perverted judgment, ſtands in competition with it. Like Achilles, *jura negat ſibi nata*; *nihil non arrogat armis*. Reaſon and religion ſhould, therefore, exert their united authority, to check the influence of ſuch baneful errors: And law ſhould rigorouſly puniſh, with diſgrace and infamy, the man, who can ſacrifice humanity to pride, and juſtice to the ſpecious counterfeit of gallantry.

I ſhall cloſe this ſection with the following paſſage, from the celebrated Commentaries of Sir William Blackſtone. "Expreſs malice is, when one, with a "ſedate, deliberate mind, and formed deſign, doth "kill another; which formed deſign is evidenced by "external circumſtances diſcovering that inward intention; as, lying in wait, antecedent menaces, former "grudges, and concerted ſchemes to do him ſome "bodily harm. This takes in the caſe of deliberate "duelling, where both parties meet, avowedly, with "an intent to murder; thinking it their duty as gentlemen, and claiming it as their right, to wanton with "their

"their own lives, and thoſe of their fellow-creatures;
"without any warrant or authority, from any power,
"either human or divine, but in direct contradiction to
"the laws both of GOD and man: And therefore, the
"law has juſtly fixed the crime and puniſhment of
"murder, on them, and on their ſeconds alſo*."

II. FALSE MAXIMS OF MORALITY†.

THE hiſtory of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, admirably exemplifies the folly and danger of adopting FALSE MAXIMS of MORALITY. From the variety of inſtances, which offer themſelves, in the memoirs of this romantic nobleman, I ſhall ſelect the following. During his abode at the duke of Montmorency's, about twenty-four miles from Paris, it happened, one evening, that a daughter of the dutcheſs de Ventadour, of about ten or eleven years of age, went to walk in the meadows with his lordſhip, and ſeveral other gentlemen and ladies. The young lady wore a knot of ribband on her head, which a French chevalier ſnatched away, and faſtened to his hatband. He was deſired to return it, but refuſed. The lady then requeſted lord Herbert to reco-

* Book IV. chap. 14.

† See page 13.

ver

ver it for her. A race enſued; and the chevalier, finding himſelf likely to be overtaken, made a ſudden turn, and was about to deliver his prize to the young lady, when lord Herbert ſeized his arm, and cried out, "I give it you." "Pardon me," ſaid the lady, "it is he who gives it me." "Madam," replied lord Herbert, "I will not contradict you; but if the "chevalier do not acknowledge, that I conſtrain "him to give the ribband, I will fight with him." And the next day he ſent him a challenge, "being "bound thereunto," ſays he, "by the oath taken "when I was made knight of the bath."

He relates, alſo, three other ſimilar caſes, to ſhew *how ſtrictly he held himſelf to his oath of knighthood.* "This oath," ſays the ingenious editor of lord Herbert's life, "is one remnant of a ſuperſtitious and "romantic age, which an age, calling itſelf enlight-"ened, ſtill retains. The ſolemn ſervice at the in-"veſtiture of the knights, which has not the leaſt "connection with any thing holy, is a piece of the "ſame profane pageantry. The oath being no longer "ſuppoſed to bind, it is ſtrange mockery to invoke "heaven on ſo trifling an occaſion." And it would be more ſtrange, if each knight, like the miſguided lord Herbert, ſhould think himſelf obliged to cut a man's throat, whenever a young lady loſes her top-knot!

Theſe religious engagements are ſo often miſ-applied, that it cannot be unſeaſonable, to enter into a brief

a brief diſcuſſion of their true nature and obligation. A vow may be defined, *a devout promiſe made to* GOD, *reſpecting either the performance, or omiſſion, of ſome voluntary act*; and is often accompanied with an imprecation of Divine vengeance, on the infraction of it. The only legitimate uſe of ſuch an engagement is, to increaſe our abhorrence of what is evil, and to confirm our reſolution in the more arduous purſuits of virtue. It cannot, therefore, be applied to the neglect of any antecedent duty, or to the accompliſhment of any impious or immoral purpoſe. Were it otherwiſe, theſe arbitrary ties might be made a plea for violating every law, whether human or divine. Even prudence, in certain caſes, is of ſufficient force to ſuperſede the validity of a vow. Thus, if the ſuperſtitious parent of a numerous and helpleſs family were, in ſome preſſing danger, to invoke the aſſiſtance of Heaven, by the moſt ſolemn avowal of his reſolution, to give all his ſubſtance to the church, or to the poor; ſuch an abſurd intention has not the nature of an engagement, and is void in itſelf. For, we are aſſured, that the execution of it could never prove acceptable to a wiſe and benevolent Deity, with whom alone the contract was made. But this reaſoning does not extend to raſh and injurious bargains; or to promiſes of a ſocial nature, which have been confirmed by an oath. For, as the maintenance of faith is of the higheſt importance in the commerce of life, to add impiety to the breach of it, muſt certainly be deemed an aggravation of the offence. And,

in

in ſuch inſtances, *the good man changeth not, though he ſwear to his own hurt.*

III. FEALTY TO MAGISTRATES*.

THE COMMANDS of the MAGISTRATE, or of the LEGISLATURE, are not binding, when they oppoſe the known and acknowledged obligations of morality. And the younger Cato has been juſtly cenſured, for engaging in the execution of what he himſelf deemed a violent and moſt oppreſſive ſentence, againſt Ptolemy, king of Cyprus. This prince was brother to the king of Egypt; and reigned by the ſame right of hereditary ſucceſſion. He was in full peace and amity with Rome; and was accuſed of no practices, nor ſuſpected of any deſigns, againſt the republic. But the infamous Clodius, who was then tribune, propoſed and obtained the law, from motives of private pique and revenge. To give a ſanction to it, Cato was charged with its fulfilment; and undertook the commiſſion, though contrary to all his ideas of juſtice and rectitude. I believe no moraliſt, of the preſent times, will admit the validity of Cicero's apology, for the miſconduct of his friend. "The "commiſſion," ſays he, "was deſigned not to adorn, "but to baniſh Cato; not offered, but impoſed upon

* See page 14.

"him.

"him. Why then did he obey it? For the ſame "reaſon, that he *ſwore to obey* other laws, which he "knew to be unjuſt; that he might not expoſe himſelf "to the fury of his enemies, or, by a fruitleſs pertina-"city, deprive the republic of his ſervices." *Orat: pro Sexto.*

The conduct of SCIPIO AFRICANUS, in the deſtruction of the brave Numantines, is equally reprehenſible. For it is confeſſed, by Lucius Florus, that the Romans commenced hoſtilities againſt that people, without even a pretence to render them juſtifiable. And the horrid barbarities, exerciſed in the ſiege of Numantia, excite peculiar indignation, from the unparalleled fortitude and vigour, which the inhabitants diſplayed in the defence of their liberties. Such bravery, exerted in a cauſe ſo noble, merited the patronage, and ſhould have called forth the clemency, not the reſentment, of Scipio. But the Romans appear to have entertained no conſiſtent ideas, concerning the privileges of other nations, or the common rights of mankind. They proudly arrogated to themſelves the government of the world; and the maxim, *regere imperio populos* *, was the plea for every conqueſt. This principle pervades the writings of all their poets and hiſtorians: And even the philoſophical TACITUS,

* TU REGERE IMPERIO POPULOS Romane memento,
(Hæ tibi erunt artes) paciſque imponere morem,
Parcere ſubjectis, et debellare ſuperbos. VIRG.

in

in delivering the memoirs of Agricola, expreſſes not the ſlighteſt diſapprobation, of the numerous, and deſtructive expeditions into Britain. Yet he has, inadvertently, put into the mouth of Galgacus, one of the chieftains of our warlike anceſtors, ſuch ſentiments, as may be deemed a ſtigma on his venerable father-in-law, for obedience to imperial mandates, founded on cruelty and injuſtice. *Raptores orbis, poſtquam cuncta vaſtantibus defuere terræ, et mare ſcrutantur: Si locuples hoſtis eſt, avari; ſi pauper, ambitioſi. Quos non oriens, non occidens ſatiaverit: Soli omnium, opes atque inopiam, pari affectu concupiſcunt. Auferre, trucidare, rapere falſis nominibus, imperium; atque ubi ſolitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*.*

"Theſe plunderers of the world, after exhauſting "the land by their devaſtations, are rifling the ocean: "Stimulated by avarice, if their enemy be rich; by "ambition, if poor: Unſatiated by the eaſt, and by "the weſt: The only people, who behold wealth and "indigence with equal avidity: To ravage, to ſlaugh-"ter, to uſurp, under falſe titles, they call empire: "And when they make a deſart, they call it peace†."

Modern conqueſts have been founded on claims equally invalid and tyrannical, with thoſe of the Romans. It is a ſatire on human reaſon, and ſtill more diſgraceful to the moral feelings of mankind,

* Tacit. Vit. Agric.

† Aikin's Tranſlation of the Life of Agricola.

to

to review the principles, on which the Spaniards affected to eſtabliſh their rights to the extenſive dominions in the new world. Their generals were inſtructed to notify, with great formality, to the innocent and ignorant natives of the weſtern hemiſphere, that St. Peter had ſubjected the univerſe to the juriſdiction of the Roman Pontiff; and that this lord of the whole creation had made a grant of the iſlands, of the *Terra Firma*, and of the ocean, to the Catholic Kings of Caſtile. To theſe monarchs they were required to ſubject themſelves; and, if they refuſed, the moſt exemplary vengeance was denounced againſt them. They were threatened to be deſpoiled of their wives and children, to have their country ravaged, and to be themſelves ſold for ſlaves*.

Inſtances, like theſe, afford the moſt irrefragable evidence, that fealty to magiſtrates muſt always be regarded, as a conditional obligation; and that implicit obedience to their commands may involve us in high degrees of guilt and infamy. Yet a very diſtinguiſhed hiſtorian and moraliſt has caſt a reflection on certain ſea officers, under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, who reſigned their commiſſions, from ſcruples of conſcience relative to the Spaniſh war, in 1656; which the hiſtorian himſelf acknowledges to have been highly impolitic, and a moſt unwarrantable violation of treaty. "They thought," ſays Mr.

* See Herrara, Dec. I. lib. VII. cap. 14; alſo Robertſon's Hiſtory of America, note 23.

Hume, "no command of their ſuperiors could juſtify "a war, which was contrary to the principles of "natural equity, and which the civil magiſtrate had "no right to order. Individuals they maintained, "in reſigning to the public their natural liberty, could "beſtow on it only what they themſelves were poſ-"ſeſſed of, a right of performing lawful actions, and "could inveſt it with no authority of commanding "what is contrary to the decrees of heaven. Such "maxims, though they ſeem reaſonable, are perhaps "too perfect for human nature, and muſt be re-"garded as one effect, though of the moſt innocent "and even honourable kind, of that ſpirit, partly "fanatical, partly republican, which predominated in "England." That *maxims which ſeem reaſonable, and a ſpirit of the moſt innocent, and even honourable kind,* ſhould be deemed *too perfect for human nature,* participates of Machiavelian policy. It muſt be acknowledged, however, that individuals cannot often be fully competent to decide of the juſtice or injuſtice of foreign wars; and that the officers of the ſtate are bound to obey the commands of lawful authority, when they are not oppoſite to the clear dictates of honour and equity. But whenever the mind has ſufficient evidence of the improbity, oppreſſion, or tyranny of public meaſures, no one, under ſuch conviction, can voluntarily abet or aid them, in conſiſtence with duty to himſelf, to his country, and to mankind. At the commencement of the late conteſt with America, the earl of Effingham found himſelf in this diſtreſsful predicament; as appears from his

his letter of reſignation, addreſſed to lord Barrington; wherein he expreſſes his feelings in the following terms. "Your lordſhip is no ſtranger to the conduct which I have obſerved in the unhappy diſputes with our American Colonies. The king is too juſt and too generous not to believe, that the votes I have given in Parliament have been given according to the dictates of my conſcience. Whether I have erred or not, the courſe of future events muſt determine. In the mean time, if I were capable of ſuch duplicity, as to be any way concerned in enforcing thoſe meaſures of which I have ſo publicly and ſolemnly expreſſed my diſapprobation, I ſhould ill deſerve what I am moſt ambitious of obtaining, the eſteem and favourable opinion of my ſovereign.

My requeſt therefore to your lordſhip is this, that after having laid thoſe circumſtances before the king, you will aſſure his majeſty, that he has not a ſubject who is more ready than I am with the utmoſt cheerfulneſs to ſacrifice his life and fortune in ſupport of the ſafety, honour, and dignity of his majeſty's crown and perſon. But the very ſame principles, which have inſpired me with theſe unalterable ſentiments of duty and affection to his majeſty, will not ſuffer me to be inſtrumental in depriving any part of his people of thoſe liberties, which form the beſt ſecurity for their fidelity and obedience to his government. As I cannot, without reproach from my own conſcience, conſent to bear arms againſt my fellow-ſubjects in

America, in what to my weak diſcernment is not a clear cauſe; and as it ſeems now to be finally reſolved, that the twenty-ſecond regiment is to go upon American ſervice, I deſire your lordſhip to lay me in the moſt dutiful manner at his majeſty's feet, and humbly beg that I may be permitted to retire.

Your lordſhip will eaſily conceive the regret and mortification I feel at being neceſſitated to quit the military profeſſion, which has been that of my anceſtors for many generations, to which I have been bred almoſt from my infancy; to which I have devoted the ſtudy of my life; and to perfect myſelf in which, I have ſought inſtruction and ſervice in whatever part of the world they were to be found.

I have delayed this to the laſt moment, leſt any wrong conſtruction ſhould be given to a conduct which is influenced only by the pureſt motives. I complain of nothing; I love my profeſſion, and ſhould think it highly blameable to quit any courſe of life, in which I might be uſeful to the public, ſo long as my conſtitutional principles, and my notions of honour, permitted me to continue in it." Sept. 12, 1775.

In the preſent hoſtilities between the Swedes and the Ruſſians, diſquietudes are ſaid to have ariſen in the minds of ſome of the Swediſh officers, concerning the legality of the war. "The fourteenth article in the form of government, preſented by the king, and agreed

agreed to by the diet, after the revolution of 1772, expreſsly determines, 'that the king cannot carry 'on an offenſive war, without the conſent of the 'ſtates aſſembled.' Nevertheleſs the hoſtile diſpoſitions of Ruſſia againſt Sweden, at the period of fitting out the armaments, have been ſufficiently proved, ſo as not to render it doubtful, whether the preſent war on our part is more *offenſive* than *defenſive*. On this account, ſcruples have ariſen in the minds of ſome officers ſerving in the army in Finland, 'whether the officers, who, from 'the mere will of the king, without the previous 'conſent of the diet, and even without the knowledge 'of the ſtates, allow themſelves to be employed in 'the war, which has every appearance of being OF-'FENSIVE on our part, at leaſt, in the preſent cam-'paign, do not render themſelves reſponſible to the 'nation aſſembled, and puniſhable ſooner or later, 'for having acted contrary to their oath.' Yielding to theſe ſcruples, five officers applied for diſmiſſion, and their example was ſoon followed by ſeveral others*."

* General Evening Poſt, Sept. 2, 1788.

IV. FALSE OPINIONS CONCERNING FRIENDSHIP*.

MANY of the ancients appear to have entertained very enthuſiaſtic notions of FRIENDSHIP; and to have ſuppoſed, that it ſuperſedes, in particular circumſtances, both wiſdom and prudence, and every ſpecies of moral obligation. When Bloſſius, the boſom companion of the elder Gracchus, was ſummoned before the ſenate of Rome, after the tumult which proved fatal to that tribune, he was interrogated, whether he had always obeyed the commands of Gracchus? "Yes," anſwered Bloſſius, "moſt punc-"tually, for ſo I thought it my duty to do. And, if "it had been poſſible for him to deſire me to fire the "Capitol, I ſhould not have ſcrupled to comply, from "my full confidence in his rectitude†." The folly and criminality of ſuch a blind ſacrifice of reaſon and judgment to the will of another, are too obvious to need any comment. Connections, of this ſervile nature, merit not the honourable appellation of friendſhip. And we may juſtly adopt the opinion, which Cicero has delivered, concerning them: *Si omnia facienda ſint, quæ amici velint, non* AMICITIÆ *tales ſed* CONJURATIONES *putandæ ſunt*‡.

* See page 19.

† Plut. Vit. Gracchi. ‡ Cic. de Off.

---------- The friendſhips of the world
Are oft *confederacies* in vice. ADDISON's Cato.

Not

Not leſs foreign to the true obligations of this amiable and venerable paſſion, was the exclamation of Themiſtocles: "God forbid, that I ſhould ſit upon a "tribunal, where my friends were not more favoured "than ſtrangers!" The letter of king Ageſilaus, to one of the Spartan judges, which Plutarch has preſerved, is a ſtill more ſtriking proof of the practical influence of the ſame falſe opinion; becauſe this prince was a man of probity and equity, virtues which belonged not to the Athenian ſtateſman. "If Nicias "be innocent," ſays he, "acquit him, for th ſake of "juſtice; but, if he be guilty, acquit him, for the "ſake of my attachment to him*." The Roman moraliſt, whom I have ſo lately quoted, very forcibly objects to the interference of friendſhip, in the magiſterial functions: Yet, by a ſtrange deluſion, he permits an advocate to give a *plauſible colouring* to the offence, with which his friend is charged; and to place the fact in the moſt advantageous, though it ſhould be a *falſe* light†. In his treatiſe *de Amicitia*, he remarks, that, "in caſes, which affect the life, or good "fame of a friend, it may be allowable to deviate, "a little, from what is *ſtrictly right*, in order to com-"ply with his deſires; provided, however, that our "own character be not injured by it." Such looſe and erroneous maxims certainly merit animadverſion. And I ſhall relate the following incident, which occurred ſeveral centuries before the period of Cicero,

* Plut. in Vit. Ageſilai.

† Cic. de Off. lib. II. 14.

as an antidote to them. Chilo, the Lacedemonian, one of the ſages of Greece, who is celebrated for the ſentence, KNOW THYSELF, which he cauſed to be written, at Delphos, in letters of gold, is ſaid to have addreſſed himſelf to his friends, when on his death bed, in terms to this effect. "I cannot, through the "courſe of a long life, look back, with uneaſineſs, "upon any ſingle inſtance of my conduct, unleſs, per- "haps, on that, which I am going to mention, where- "in, I confeſs, I am ſtill doubtful, whether I acted "properly or not. I was once appointed judge, in "conjunction with two others, when my particular friend "was arraigned before us. Were the laws to have "taken their due courſe, he muſt, inevitably, have "been condemned to die. After much debate, there- "fore, with myſelf, I adopted this expedient. I gave "my own vote according to my conſcience, but, at "the ſame time, employed all my eloquence to pre- "vail with my aſſociates to abſolve the criminal. Now "I cannot but reflect upon this act, with concern, "from an apprehenſion, that there was ſomething of "perfidy, in perſuading others to go counter to what "I myſelf eſteemed right*."

Tully's falſe ideas, concerning the privileges of friendſhip, betrayed him on ſeveral occaſions, into meanneſs, and even immorality of conduct. In one of his letters, he earneſtly ſolicits Atticus, to be guilty

* See ſome judicious obſervations on this ſubject, in Fitz-oſborne's Letters.

of

of prevarication, in his defence. It ſeems that he had written an invective oration, againſt an eminent ſenator, ſuppoſed to be Curio. The piece was deſigned only for the entertainment of a ſelect party; but had fallen into the hands of his enemies, and been publiſhed by them. He wrote, therefore, to his friend, in the following terms. *Percuſſiſti autem me de oratione prolata; cui vulneri, ut ſcribis, medere, ſi quid potes.* ——— *et, quia ſcripta mihi videtur negligentius, quam cæteræ, puto poſſes probare non eſſe meam**. "You have ſhocked me with the news that my oration "is made public. Heal the wound, if you poſſibly "can. ——— As it is written more negligently "than my other orations, I think you may prove it "*not to be mine.*" It is remarkable, that Tully ſhould have made a requeſt, of this nature, to Atticus, who is ſaid to have had ſuch an abhorrence of deceit, that he never uttered a falſehood himſelf, nor could pardon it in another. Cicero's letter to Lucceius, requeſting him to write the hiſtory of his life, "and not to reject "the generous partiality of friendſhip, *but to give* "*more to affection than to truth,*" is too well known to be recited here†.

But,

* Ep. ad Attic. III. 12.

† In the intercourſe of friendſhip, the Romans do not appear to have diſplayed much delicacy of ſentiment. The paſſages, which I have quoted from Cicero, evince the truth of this obſervation. Horace affords a further confirmation of it, in the cloſe of his beautiful addreſs to Groſphus, Ode XVI. Lib. II. And Pliny, in one of his familiar epiſtles (Ep. XIX. Lib. I.)

But, extravagantly as many of the ancients have eſtimated friendſhip, a modern writer, of diſtinguiſhed eminence, has rated it ſtill higher; and does not heſitate to aſſert, that all the diſcourſes on the ſubject, which are handled down to us, appear to him flat and low, in compariſon with the ſenſe, which he entertains of it. "This bond," he ſays, "diſſolves every antece-"dent obligation, and the ſecret, which I have ſworn "not to reveal to another, I may, without perjury, "communicate to him, who is not *another*, but *myſelf**." If the author of the *Internal Evidence of Chriſtianity* † had confined himſelf to ſuch unwarrantable ideas of

Lib. I.) diſgraces an act of the moſt exalted generoſity, by the inſult to amity, which accompanies it. "Born," ſays he to Romanus Firmus, "in the ſame town, educated in the ſame "ſchool, and living with you, from early youth, in habits "of ſtrict connection, I feel the ſtrongeſt motives to promote "the advancement of your fortune and dignity. I ſend you, "therefore, three hundred thouſand ſeſterces, (£2421 ſterling) "to elevate you from the rank of Decurio, to that of a Roman "Knight." But he then adds, "From my knowledge of your "character, it is unneceſſary to admoniſh you to behave, in "your new ſtation, thus conferred by me, with the modeſty, "which becomes my beneficiary. For that honour ſhould be "ſolicitouſly preſerved, in which the reputation of a bene-"factor is involved." *Ego ne illud quidem admoneo, quod admonere deberem, niſi te ſcirem ſponte facturum, ut dignitate à me data quam modeſtiſſime, ut a me data, utare. Nam ſolicitius cuſtodiendus eſt honor, in quo etiam beneficium amici tuendum eſt.*

* See Montaigne's Eſſays, book I. chap. 27.

† Soame Jenyns, Eſq.

friendſhip,

friendſhip, when he diveſts it of the ſanction of our divine Law-giver, there could be no difficulty in acquieſcing in his deciſion. But an affection, ſo congenial to the principles of our religion, when properly governed, and judiciouſly directed, ſeems to merit, and, I truſt, is not deſtitute of, evangelical ſupport. Benevolence is, indeed, the great law of the Goſpel diſpenſation; but it muſt have its commencement in the more confined and partial charities: And the man, who has felt not the appropriated regard of a ſon, a brother, a huſband, or a friend, cannot have a heart capable of being expanded with philanthropy. Even piety itſelf originates from the filial relation, and we learn to transfer, to the Deity, that gratitude and veneration, with which the tender offices, and wiſdom of our parents firſt inſpired us. It is not the object of Chriſtianity to overturn, but to regulate the œconomy of the human mind: And, if benevolence muſt have its foundation in private affection, the divine law, which directs the former, neceſſarily inculcates the latter.

That our Saviour himſelf experienced the tendereſt ſympathies of friendſhip, may, I think, be juſtly deduced, both from his ſtrong attachment to John, the favourite diſciple, and from the expreſſions of peculiar endearment, with which he performed the miracle of raiſing Lazarus from the dead. On this affecting occaſion, the Evangeliſt relates, that *Jeſus wept:* And ſo ſenſible were the Jews of the anguiſh of his ſoul, that

that they cried out, *Behold how he loved him* !* And, if Chriſt gave ſuch a deciſive proof of perſonal attachment and friendſhip, the hiſtory of the Goſpel no leſs clearly evinces, that his diſciples felt an affection of the ſame tender and peculiar kind, to their Divine Maſter. In the pathetic converſation, which paſſed, previous to the ſufferings and death of Jeſus, when he prophetically, but tenderly charged them with their future defection, Peter, in the warmth of his regard, replied, *though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* The bitter repentance of this Apoſtle, ſubſequent to the miſconduct, which his great Maſter had predicted, affords a further diſplay of the force of his friendſhip. And Chriſt himſelf, afterwards, honoured him with the kindeſt and moſt explicit acknowledgment of it. *So, when they had dined, Jeſus ſaith to Simon Peter, Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me, more than theſe? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, feed my lambs. He ſaith unto him again, the ſecond time, Simon, ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, feed my ſheep. He ſaith unto him, the third time, Simon, ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter was grieved becauſe he ſaid unto him the third time, loveſt thou me? And he ſaid unto him, Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. Jeſus ſaith unto him, feed my ſheep* †.

* John, chapter xi. ver. 35, 36. See ſome admirable reflections on this ſubject, in the notes to Mr. Melmoth's tranſlation of Lælius.

† John, chap. xxi. ver. 15, 16, 17.

In

In the intereſting paſſage, here recited, that lively, reciprocal, and peculiar regard, which conſtitutes friendſhip, is not only recogniſed, but appealed to, and authorized, as a generous and animating principle of action. And, if the great Founder of our religion has no where expreſsly ordained it, as a duty, it is probably, becauſe this virtue is of *ſpecial*, and not of *univerſal* obligation; depending on particular relations, and contingent circumſtances, which human power can ſeldom influence or command. It may be added, too, that the divine law preſuppoſes the exiſtence of ſuch affections, as are purely natural and ſpontaneous; and directs its precepts, not to their production, but ſolely to their government and regulation. Hence, we find not, in the whole compaſs of the ſcriptures, one explicit injunction to parents, to love their children. Yet, ſurely, this very eſſential moral office is not to be excluded from the catalogue of evangelical graces, notwithſtanding the ſilence of ſacred writ, concerning it. And the ſame plea may be extended to friendſhip, with due allowance for its rarer occurrence, and more partial obligation. The Chriſtian, therefore, in perfect conſiſtency with his faith, may admire and imitate the examples of generous amity, which hiſtory and obſervation exhibit to his view. *Peradventure for a good man*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ſome might even dare to die*. And the ſacrifice of our own eaſe, intereſt, or life itſelf, for the advantage of another, with whom we are connected by ſtrong and peculiar ties, may not only be juſtifiable, but highly honourable and meritorious. Let it be remembered, however, that the privileges of

friendſhip

friendſhip are ſubordinate to the rights of ſociety; and that no attachment, merely perſonal, can warrant the violation of juſtice, fidelity, or truth.

The ideas, which have been entertained of VALOUR, and the LOVE of our COUNTRY, are ſtill more licentious than thoſe above recited, concerning FRIENDSHIP. It ſhould ſeem, that the underſtanding is dazzled by the ſplendour, which uſually accompanies theſe virtues; and that they are eſtimated by the rarity of their occurrence, or by the elevated ſtation of their poſſeſſors, rather than by the ſtandard of intrinſic merit, or public utility. Juſtice and probity are ſlightly regarded, as the *ordinary* duties of ſocial life, equally incumbent on all ranks of men: And he who practiſes them, appears to have no claim to more than common approbation. But great exertions of courage or patriotiſm, as they exceed the demands, ſo they proportionably excite the admiration of our fellow-citizens. This admiration kindles in the mind an enthuſiaſm, which often ſuſpends, and ſometimes ſuppreſſes the calmer principles of humanity, equity, and truth: And the hero or patriot is indulged in all the privileges, which he aſſumes; nothing being judged criminal, that promotes the perſonal glory of the one, or the ambitious views of the other. The hiſtory of all ages confirms the truth of theſe obſervations: But they are more particularly applicable to the records of antiquity; which, for the moſt part, celebrate the deeds of warriors and ſtateſmen, with unqualified applauſe, and without the leaſt diſcrimination of right and wrong.

V. DUPLI-

V. DUPLICITY OF CHARLES I*.

CONSULT Clarendon, vol. I. p. 22. Ruſhworth, vol. I. from p. 119 to 127. Hume's Hiſt. 4to. vol. I. p. 103. Ed. 1754. "He had promiſed to the "laſt houſe of commons a redreſs of this religious "grievance; but he was too apt, in imitation of his "father, to conſider theſe promiſes as temporary ex- "pedients, which, after the diſſolution of the parlia- "ment, he was not any further to regard." Id. p. 156. See alſo the Life of the Lord Keeper Williams, p. 143. Whitlock, p. 10. The Petition of Rights. Harris's Hiſt. Sidney's State Papers, vol. II. p. 665, &c. Rapin ſays, "Charles made frequent "uſe of mental reſervations, concealed in ambiguous "terms, and general expreſſions, of which he reſerved "the explication to a proper time and place. For "this reaſon, the parliament could never confide in "his promiſes, wherein there was always either ſome "ambiguous term, or ſome reſtriction that rendered "them uſeleſs. This may be ſaid to be one of the "principal cauſes of his ruin; becauſe giving thereby "occaſion of diſtruſt, it was not poſſible to find any "expedient for a peace with the parliament. He was "thought to act with ſo little ſincerity in his engage- "ments, that it was believed there was no dependence

* See page 84.

"on

" on his word. The parliament could not even re-
" ſolve to debate on the king's propoſitions, ſo con-
" vinced were they of his ability to hide his real in-
" tentions, under ambiguous expreſſions." Rapin's Hiſt. vol. II. p. 570. The following paſſage is taken from the works of an hiſtorian, who is acknowledged to have been very partial to king Charles. " *Malè*
" *poſita eſt lex, quæ tumultuariè poſita eſt*, was one of
" thoſe poſitions of Ariſtotle," ſays he, " which hath
" never ſince been contradicted; and was an advan-
" tage, that, being well managed, and ſtoutly inſiſted
" upon, would, in ſpite of all their machinations, which
" were not yet firmly and ſolidly formed, have
" brought them to a temper of being treated with.
" But I have ſome cauſe to believe, that even this
" argument, which was unanſwerable for the rejecting
" that bill, was applied for the confirming it; and an
" opinion that the violence and force, uſed in pro-
" curing it, rendered it abſolutely invalid and void,
" made the confirmation of it leſs conſidered, as not
" being of ſtrength to make that act good, which was
" in itſelf null. And I doubt this logic had an in-
" fluence upon other acts of leſs moment." Clarendon's Hiſt. vol. II. p. 30. Rapin makes the following obſervation on this paſſage. " Let the reader
" judge after this, if we may boaſt of king Charles's
" ſincerity, ſince even in paſſing acts of parliament,
" which are the moſt authentic and ſolemn promiſes
" a king of England can make, he gave his aſſent,
" merely in an opinion, that they were void in them-
" ſelves, and conſequently he was not bound by this
" engagement."

"engagement." I have inſerted theſe references and quotations, not merely to authenticate the charge againſt king Charles, but to ſhew, from his unhappy fate, how deluſive, dangerous, and infamous, is the following political obſervation of Machiavel. "It has appeared by experience, that thoſe princes "who have made light of their word, and artfully "deceived mankind, have all along done great things, "and have at length got the better of ſuch as pro-"ceeded upon honourable principles."

VI. DISPUTATION*.

POLEMIC SKILL is a dangerous qualification; and, if not governed by charity, wiſdom, and integrity, may betray the poſſeſſor, either into intemperate zeal, or abſolute indifference for truth. Every object aſſumes an importance, in our eſtimation, proportioned, in ſome degree, to the labour and attention which we beſtow upon it. And the ſame enthuſiaſm, that dignifies a butterfly or a medal to the virtuoſo and the antiquary, may convert controverſy into quixotiſm; and preſent, to the deluded imagination of the theological knight-errant, a barber's baſin, as Mambrino's

* See page 94.

helmet*. The real value of any doctrine can only be determined, by its influence on the conduct of man, with reſpect to himſelf, to his fellow-creatures, or to GOD. And it has been well obſerved, by a writer, of diſtinguiſhed abilities, that ſome kinds of error and ſuperſtition are ſo intimately connected with truth and virtue, as to render the ſeparation of them impracticable, without doing violence to both. It is better, therefore, according to our Saviour's excellent advice, to let a few tares grow up with the wheat, (if they be of ſuch a nature, as to ſuffer the wheat to grow along with them) than to endanger the deſtruction of the wheat, by rooting up the tares†.

Bigotry may be aſſociated with truth, as well as with error: And this temper of mind is always unfavourable to piety and philanthropy, whatever be the principles on which it is founded. Eraſmus aſſerts, that moſt of the reformers, with whom he was acquainted, became worſe men, in conſequence of the revolution, which they accompliſhed. I know not whether this fact will be admitted, on his authority. But certain it is, that the fury of zeal, and the acrimony of diſputation, are neither conſonant to the religion of nature, nor to the meek and peaceable ſpirit of the Goſpel.

But polemic ſkill is ſometimes employed in the defence of opinions, which are known or believed to be

* See Don Quixote.

† See Prieſtley on the Sacrament, p. 64.

falſe.

falſe. And, by this practice, the underſtanding either becomes the dupe of its own impoſitions; or acquires that indifference to truth, which conſtitutes incurable ſcepticiſm, and ſometimes terminates in the moſt fatal depravity. For he, who has learned to be regardleſs of right and wrong, in ſentiment or in principle, can have no ſolicitude about the like diſtinctions, in his diſpoſitions or behaviour. Such moral apathy gives full ſcope to every irregular deſire, and vicious propenſity. And, if it be aſſociated with great intellectual endowments, a character may be formed, at once the glory and the diſgrace of human nature. Salluſt deſcribes Catiline as *ſubdolus, varius, cujuſlibet rei* SIMULATOR *ac* DISSIMULATOR. And I am inclined to believe, that the remarkable portrait of SERVIN, which the duke of Sully has drawn, owes ſome of its moſt diſtinguiſhing features to the cauſe here alluded to. "Let the reader repreſent to himſelf, a man of "a genius ſo lively, and an underſtanding ſo exten- "ſive, as rendered him ſcarcely ignorant of any thing "that could be known; of ſo vaſt and ready a com- "prehenſion, that he immediately made himſelf ma- "ſter of whatever he attempted; and of ſo prodigious "a memory, that he never forgot what he had once "learned. He poſſeſſed all parts of philoſophy and "the mathematics, particularly fortification and draw- "ing. *Even, in Theology, he was ſo well ſkilled, that "he was an excellent preacher, whenever he had a mind "to exert that talent, and an able diſputant, for and "againſt the reformed religion indifferently.* He not "only underſtood Greek, Hebrew, and all the lan-

" guages, which we call learned, but alſo all the " different jargons, or modern dialects. He alſo ac- " cented and pronounced them ſo naturally, and ſo " perfectly imitated the geſtures and manners, both of " the ſeveral nations of Europe, and the particular " provinces of France, that he might have been taken " for a native of all, or any of theſe countries; and " this quality he applied to counterfeit all ſorts of per- " ſons, wherein he ſucceeded wonderfully. He was, " moreover, the beſt comedian and greateſt droll, that, " perhaps, ever appeared. He had a genius for " poetry, and had written many verſes. He played " upon almoſt all inſtruments, was a perfect maſter of " muſic, and ſung moſt agreeably and juſtly. *He* " *likewiſe could ſay maſs; for he was of a diſpoſition to* " *do, as well as to know, all things.* His body was " perfectly well ſuited to his mind; he was light, nim- " ble, dextrous, and fit for all exerciſes: He could " ride well; and in dancing, wreſtling, and leaping, " he was admired. There are not any recreative " games that he did not know; and he was ſkilled in " almoſt all mechanic arts. But, now for the reverſe " of the medal: Here it appeared, that he was " treacherous, cruel, cowardly, deceitful; a liar, a " cheat, a drunkard, and a glutton; a ſharper in play, " immerſed in every ſpecies of vice, a blaſphemer, an " atheiſt. In a word, in him might be found all the " vices contrary to nature, honour, religion, and ſo- " ciety; the truth of which he himſelf evinced with his " lateſt breath; for he died, in the flower of his age, " in a common brothel, perfectly corrupted by his " debaucheries,

" debaucheries, and expired, with a glaſs in his hand, " curſing and denying GOD *."

VII. INDISCRIMINATE PLEADINGS OF LAWYERS †.

THE Roman orators engaged in the defence of their clients or dependants, in the courts of judicature, without fee or reward: And, under ſuch circumſtances, it might be ſuppoſed, that their pleadings would be regulated by the pure principles of juſtice and rectitude. But the fact was often far otherwiſe, through the influence of ambition, the pride of victory, the connections of party, and the future expectation of gifts or legacies. Hortenſius ſupported the cauſe of the infamous Verres: And Cicero ſeems to have formed a deſign of undertaking that of Catiline, when he was brought to trial, on account of his cruel and ſcandalous oppreſſions in Africa. For, in a letter to Atticus, he ſays, " It is my preſent intention to de- " fend Catiline. We have judges to our mind; yet " ſuch as pleaſe the accuſer himſelf. I hope, if he be " acquitted, it will incline him to ſerve me in our " common petition." Indeed, this celebrated orator does not ſcruple to declare, that it is the buſineſs of

* See the Tranſlation of Sully's Memoirs, vol. III. p. 92.

† See page 99.

an advocate not ſo much to deliver what is *true* as what is uſeful to his client; the diſcovery of truth, being the office of the judge, and not of the pleader; a ſentiment which he juſtifies on the authority of Panætius the Stoic (de officiis II. 14.) In one of his orations, he ſays, "That man is much miſtaken, "who conceives he has an authentic ſpecimen of our "opinions in theſe judicial pleadings: They are the "ſpeeches of the cauſes, and of the times, not of the "men or the advocates." (Pro A. Cluentio.) Quinctilian, though he lays it down as a rule, that an orator ſhould be a good man (Oratorem eſſe virum bonum, dicendi peritum) allows, notwithſtanding, very conſiderable latitude to the art of pleading, as will appear from the cloſe of the firſt chapter of his twelfth book. Modern lawyers have carried the licenſe of the bar to its utmoſt extent. And a judge, in his charge to the jury, at the aſſizes for the county and city of Worceſter, declared it to be "the "duty of every counſel, upon all occaſions, and "without reſerve, to take the brief which ſhould be "firſt offered him." (See Notes to Juſtification, a Poem.) It is, probably, on this ground, a celebrated hiſtorian has aſſerted, that the gentlemen of the long robe "govern their conſciences by rules peculiar to "themſelves, and entirely oppoſite to the ideas which "prevail with honeſt men of other profeſſions." (Macaulay's Hiſt. of England.) It ſhould ſeem, that the father of Sir Matthew Hale entertained the like ſentiments: For Biſhop Burnet relates, that he quitted the bar, becauſe he diſapproved of the common mode of

of *giving colour, in pleadings*; which, he thought a culpable deviation from truth. It is recorded, alſo, of Sir Matthew Hale himſelf, that, whenever he was convinced of the injuſtice of any cauſe, he would engage no farther in it, than to explain, to his client, the grounds of that conviction. His biographer ſays, that he abhorred the practice of miſreciting evidences, quoting precedents or books falſely or unfairly, ſo as to deceive ignorant juries, or inattentive judges; and that he adhered to the ſame ſcrupulous ſincerity in his pleadings, which he obſerved in the other tranſactions of his life. For, he uſed to ſay, "it was as great "a diſhonour, as a man was capable of, that, for a "little money, he was to be hired to ſay or do, other-"wiſe than he thought*."

According to the laws which now ſubſiſt, no counſellor can maintain an action for his fees, or ſo much as demand them, without doing wrong to his reputation†. He is liable, alſo, to a year's impriſonment, and to be condemned to perpetual ſilence, in the courts, if detected in the practice of deceit or colluſion‡.

* See Britiſh Biography, vol. V. p. 383.

† See Blackſtone's Commentaries, book III. ch. 3.

‡ Statute Weſtm. I. 3 Edw. I. chap. 28. Blackſtone's Commentaries, book III. chap. 3.

ON

HABIT AND ASSOCIATION.

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

I. REV. SIMON BROWNE*.

THE conjectures, concerning the cauſe of Mr. Browne's very extraordinary inſanity, having been read, in the former edition of this work, by one acquainted with the real circumſtances of the caſe, I have been favoured with the communication of the following intereſting particulars. "Mr. Browne and "another miniſter were walking together, near Hamp-"ſtead, in a part of the road, infeſted by a notorious "footpad. His companion ſaid, ſuppoſe the footpad "ſhould attack us, what ſhall we do? It will be a "ſhame, replied Mr. Browne, for two perſons, ſo

* See page 123.

"ſtout

" ſtout as we are, to be robbed by one man. Soon " afterwards, the footpad appeared; and, whilſt the " other miniſter amuſed him with the delivery of his " money, Mr. Browne got behind him, took him in " his arms, threw him down, and held him faſt, but " did not ſtrike him. The companion ran for aſſiſt- " ance, and ſoon returned. Mr. Browne roſe up; " but on detaching himſelf from the robber, found " that he had preſſed him to death. The ſhock of " this event, with his previous agitation of mind, " affected his brain ſo forcibly, that he thought God " had taken away his ſoul from him; and that he " did it, judicially, for his neglect of the divine rule " of our Saviour: *If any man take thy cloak, let him* " *have thy coat alſo.*"

II. INFLUENCE OF SCENERY ON ASSOCIATION*.

IN the life of the honourable Robert Boyle, drawn up by himſelf, we are informed that, " cu- " rioſity led him to thoſe wild mountains, where the " firſt and chiefeſt of the Carthuſian abbies does ſtand " ſeated; where the devil, taking advantage of that " deep raving melancholy, ſo ſad a place, his hu- " mour, and the ſtrange ſtories and pictures he found " there of *Bruno*, the father of that order, ſuggeſted

* See page 137.

" ſuch

" ſuch ſtrange and hideous thoughts, and ſuch diſtract-
" ing doubts of ſome of the fundamentals of chriſtia-
" nity, that, though his looks did little betray his
" thoughts, nothing but the forbiddenneſs of ſelf-
" diſpatch hindered his acting it. But, after a tedious
" languiſhment of many months, in this tedious per-
" plexity, at laſt it pleaſed God, one day he had
" received the ſacrament, to reſtore unto him the
" withdrawn ſenſe of his favour."

BOYLE's Works, 4to, vol. I. p. 23.

III. LUDICROUS ASSOCIATIONS*.

THE author of the Critique on the former edition of this work, in the Engliſh Review for September 1784, has related the following curious fact. " Some years ago, a reſpectable clergyman,
" an inhabitant of London, took country lodgings
" at a ſmall diſtance from the capital. While at
" theſe lodgings, he uſually roſe early, walked into
" the fields, and drank warm milk. In one of his
" morning walks, it ſtruck him, that he would try
" if he could milk a cow; he immediately ſquatted
" down, in imitation of the dairy-maids, and began
" to exerciſe his fingers, after their manner. In the
" midſt of his operations, two of the damſels arrive

* See page 141.

" in

" in the field, and, perceiving a grave clergyman in " ſo ludicrous a poſture, burſt into an immoderate fit " of laughter, accompanied with ſome jocular re- " proaches. Struck with the ridicule of his ſituation, " the clergyman hurried to his lodgings in the utmoſt " confuſion, and ſo ſtrong is the impreſſion, which " this inconſiderable incident has made upon his mind, " that ever ſince, he fancies theſe women, or ſome of " their companions, are conſtantly following him where- " ever he goes, ſinging ballads, relative to the event " which has ſo much affected him, and expoſing him, " in a variety of ways, to the laughter of his neigh- " bours. In every other reſpect, he poſſeſſes the " moſt perfect clearneſs and ſolidity of underſtanding, " diſcharges the duties of his office, as formerly; and, " as he is a man of wit and learning, is conſidered by " his acquaintance, as a valuable and an agreeable " companion." The author of this article has added, that M. Paſchal believed a gulph was before him, and a ſcreen placed, to guard him from the view of it.

IV. SECT OF QUAKERS*.

THE genius and manners of the French ſeem peculiarly unfavourable to the principles and habits of the ſect called Quakers. Yet this reſpectable community has lately planted a colony, and obtained a

* See page 155.

civil

civil eſtabliſhment, amongſt our gay and volatile neighbours. During the aſſembly of the NOTABLES, a memorial was preſented to the Count de Vergennes, by one of the heads of their ſociety, ſtating that, "In "the northern provinces of France, there are many "hundred dutiful ſubjects, who, though they are nei-"ther Roman Catholics nor Proteſtants, yet worſhip "God in the ſame temples with Jeſus and his Apoſtles, "viz. in the inward of their ſouls: And purſue, in "reverent ſilence, the doctrine of Chriſt only, without "any mixture of human innovation." The proteſtants, it is ſaid, oppoſed the petition of the quakers for the free exerciſe of their religion; and ſtrongly ſolicited, that they alone might be included in the plan of toleration. But juſtice and ſound policy prevailed in the king's council; and the quakers obtained liberty of conſcience, not only for themſelves, but, agreeably to their prayer, for every ſect, which maintains peace and good order. Decent places of burial are aſſigned to them; they are confirmed in all their rights of poſſeſſion and inheritance; and the edict of the king provides, that whenever a child is born, belonging to one who does not believe in the neceſſity of baptiſm, it ſhall only be required, of the father or mother, to notify ſuch birth to the magiſtrate.

ON

INCONSISTENCY OF EXPECTATION.

I. COMPLAINTS OF LITERARY MEN*.

MR GRAY, in one of his letters to Mr. Maſon, thus expreſſes himſelf. "A life ſpent out of "the world has its hours of deſpondence, its inconve- "niences, its ſufferings, as numerous and as real, "though not quite of the ſame ſort, as a life ſpent in the "midſt of it..... As to myſelf, I cannot boaſt, at "preſent, either of my ſpirits, my ſituation, my em- "ployments, or fertility. The days and the nights paſs, "and I am never the nearer to any thing, but that one "to which we are all tending; yet, I love people that "leave ſome traces of their journey behind them, and "have ſtrength enough to adviſe you, to do ſo while "you can." Letter XXVIII. vol. IV. p. 25. To Dr. Wharton, Mr. Gray writes in the following terms. "You flatter me in thinking that any thing I can "do†, could at all alleviate the juſt concern your loſs

* See page 179.

† Dr. Wharton had requeſted Mr. Gray to write an epitaph on his ſon.

"has

" has given you; but I cannot flatter myſelf ſo far, " and know how little qualified I am, at preſent, to " give any ſatisfaction to myſelf on this head, and in " this way; much leſs to you. I by no means pretend " to inſpiration; but yet I affirm, that the faculty, in " queſtion, is by no means voluntary; it is the reſult " (I ſuppoſe) of a certain diſpoſition of mind, which " does not depend on one's ſelf, and which I have not " felt this long time. You, that are a witneſs how " ſeldom this ſpirit has moved me in my life, may " eaſily give credit to what I ſay." Letter XXXII. vol. IV. p. 45.

II. LOVE OF SCIENCE THE RULING PASSION*.

IN the Biographical Dictionary vol. XII. under the article EULER, it is recorded of BOERHAAVE, that, when lying on his death-bed, he anxiouſly counted his pulſe, to aſcertain whether he could live to ſee a publication, which he expected from the preſs.

M. EULER in 1735 ſolved, in three days, a very extraordinary problem. But, the violent and unremitted efforts, which it coſt, occaſioned a fever, which endangered his life, and deprived him of the uſe of his right eye. Annual Regiſter 1785, p. 10.

* See page 183.

ON

ON THE ALLIANCE OF

NATURAL HISTORY WITH POETRY.

I. YELLOW VISION IN JAUNDICE*.

THIS obſervation I regarded as a vulgar error, and have endeavoured to ſhew, in the Diſſertation now referred to, that it is neither confirmed by experience, nor conſonant to reaſon; but, two inſtances have lately occurred, in the circle of my practice, which clearly evince that the opinion has ſometimes a foundation in fact; and that concluſions drawn, even from a very general induction, may be fallacious: For my obſervations were made with attention, during a courſe of near twenty years. The patients now alluded to, were men of middle age, who had lived intemperately, whoſe malady had proved obſtinate, but whoſe eyes were not tinged with bile, in an extreme degree. Yet they were uniform in their teſtimony, that all white objects aſſumed a yellow caſt; and that this hue was deepeſt, on their riſing from bed in a morning.

* See page 214.

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THE END.